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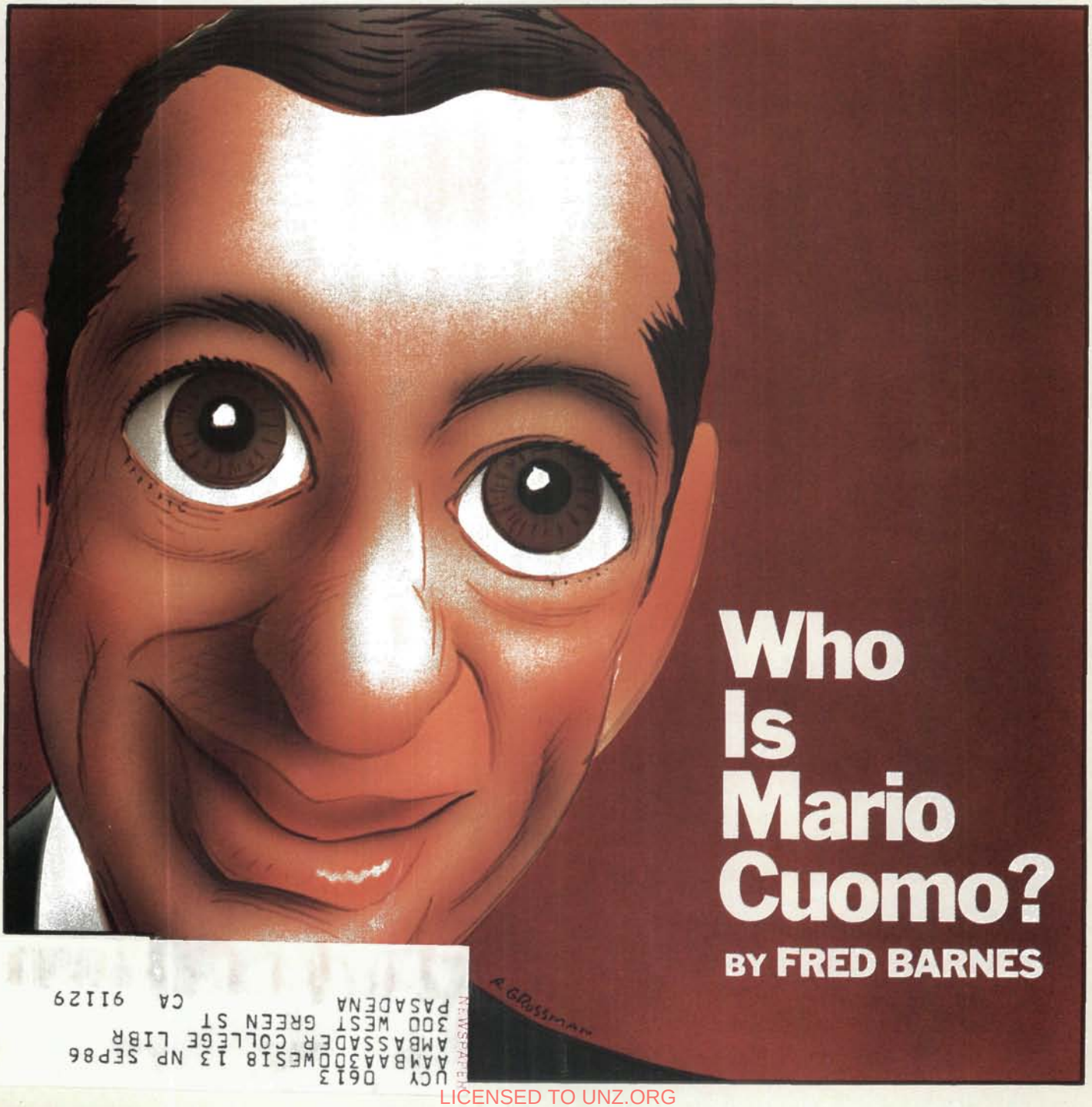
The 'Losing Ground' Debate Continues

STEPHEN SOLARZ ON DEALING WITH MARCOS • WHAT GOOD ARE ART MUSEUMS?

THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAR 26 1985



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CORRESPONDENCE

AMERICA ALONE

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer's disquisition on isolationism ("Isolationism, Left and Right," March 4) was a semantic tour de force. It managed to stretch the isolationist label over "conservative intellectuals," the Reagan administration, and the Democratic "mainstream." Unfortunately, Krauthammer failed to provide any constructive suggestions. His apparent argument—that *any* discretion in the use of force constitutes isolationism—is hardly a practical guide for those of us who must think seriously about American military strategy.

Obviously, the cause of freedom abroad "is a value in itself." But Krauthammer ignores the tough questions that follow. In what cases should we advance freedom at the cost of American lives? Given the serious discrepancies between our conventional capabilities and the types of conflicts we will likely confront, what situations *can* we influence with force? What military reforms can make the threat of American military power more credible? These questions are not smoke screens for isolationism; they are prerequisites for an intelligent foreign policy.

There is a better alternative to blind isolationism than blind interventionism. That is, to determine where America's interests and values can be advanced, and how, in each case, we can advance them. This is a difficult task, but one our nation's leaders—and journalists—must more thoughtfully address.

GARY HART
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Charles Krauthammer's article on isolationism is important and provocative. Let me respond here to only one of the issues he raises. In rejecting "right isolationism," he argues that U.S. policy ought to be grounded on an "alliance of free nations" and "a sustained internationalism [that] rests on a large vision of America, an America that stands for an idea." His complaint against the "left isolationism" of the Democratic Party is that its support for this objective is hollow because it refuses to defend this "alliance of free nations" unilaterally. Democrats' emphasis on multilateral approaches is, in Krauthammer's words, "a cover for inaction."

His argument falls victim to the same charge he uses on the Democrats: the failure to match means with ends. If the Democratic flaw is a reluctance to defend its internationalist ends with force, Krauthammer's flaw is his inability to recognize that "an alliance of free nations" cannot be sustained by unilateral defense. A free alliance—as opposed to the Warsaw Pact—is just as surely threatened when its most powerful member rejects consultation and coordinated action in favor of repeated unilateral action as it is by the threat to which it seeks to respond.

Take the example of Nicaragua. The unilateral support by the Reagan administration for the *contras* presumes that the only security interests that count in Central America are those of the United States and that Nicaragua constitutes a threat to them. Both propositions are wrong and dangerous. To the extent that Nicaragua constitutes a threat, its neighbors have much more to fear than the U.S. The U.S. can only be true to Krauthammer's "large vision of America" if it works in concert with these nations. Its rhetoric notwithstanding, the administration has ignored the views of our closest democratic friends in the region, and Krauthammer seems to be arguing that the administration should not apologize for this. Such unilateralism, however, is a tragic mistake—since our friends actually have more effective sources of leverage over the Sandinistas than we have—and because it is impossible to construct an alliance of free nations if we keep ignoring or dismissing our friends.

Multilateralism may lead to inaction or to negotiated outcomes, which are less than optimal from the U.S. perspective, but such outcomes will be more legitimate and enduring than the most optimistic scenario involving the unilateral support of the *contras*. The

continued on page 42

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FROM WASHINGTON

Political Property Rights

Here is a lesson in political economy from New York City, where you can't find a cab or an apartment to save your life. New York limits the number of cabs on the street by requiring each one to have a "medallion." The demand for cabs has risen with New York's business growth and the appalling deterioration of the subways. Yet the number of medallions has been frozen for decades at 11,787, which is barely half the cabs there were 50 years ago. Cabs may seem like a minor matter to outsiders, but they are vital to New York, where private cars are an almost unthinkable luxury. The impossibility of getting a cab at rush hour contributes to New York's general economic arteriosclerosis, making it that much more hellish a place to live, driving businesses away, and so on.

The obvious solution is to abolish the medallion system and let anyone drive a cab who wants to. Unfortunately, the obvious solution is politically impossible. A taxi medallion is worth about $80,000. A free market in taxi licenses would wipe out about a billion dollars of medallions overnight, and taxi owners are organized to make sure this doesn't happen. What's more, there's a certain justice to their cause. Most current medallion owners bought their medallions from previous owners, often using their life savings. Imposing a sudden loss on them would be unfair.

In essence, New York has turned driving a cab into what might be called a "political property right." These rights clog the economy just as deeding over plots of ground in the middle of major intersections would clog traffic. In his provocative book *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, the economist Mancur Olson argues that the older a society gets, the more such economic roadblocks it develops. In fact, he says, when the victors of World War II destroyed established political and social arrangements in Germany and Japan, this was even more of an unintended favor than the destruction of their old industrial plants.

Mayor Ed Koch has come up with an ingenious solution to New York's taxi dilemma. He wants to give each current owner a second medallion. Of course there is no guarantee that with twice as many medallions on the market, two will be worth exactly what one is worth now. But the genius of Koch's scheme is that it preserves a political property right—1/11,787 of a taxi monopoly—while reducing its bad economic effects.

Koch should now forge ahead and apply this principle to a more serious problem: rent control, a blight that has spread to Washington, Cambridge, Santa Monica, and other cities but (like so much else) is worst in New York. The rules are impossibly complicated. Basically, though, they give the most protection to people who've lived in the same apartment for many years and virtually no protection to new arrivals or people who need to move. The median rent in midtown Manhattan is $476 a month, but someone looking for a small studio apartment there will be lucky to find one for under $1,000. For this reason, no one in New York ever gives up a rent-controlled apartment. Everyone has stories of wealthy widows living in eight-room penthouses for $350 a month and people who hang on to their rent-controlled apartments while buying large homes in Connecticut.

Rent control has destroyed the New York housing market by keeping people in apartments they no longer need, discouraging maintenance by landlords, and also discouraging new construction—which, though not subject to controls, is hampered by the reasonable fear that the rules might change. The result is that housing, while a great bargain for some, is more expensive than it needs to be for others. Those who enjoy the bargain are not necessarily poorer or more deserving than those who lose out.

Then there's the bizarre culture of rent control, with its agent's fees and "key money," its sublets of sublets of sublets, its Dickensian legal controversies about whose name was on the lease, and so on. A puzzled friend called me from Texas recently to ask why *The New York Times* has huge ads offering "occupied apartments" for sale. The explanation is that a rent-controlled tenant cannot be evicted when a building goes condo or co-op. So there is a ghoulish market in apartments you can't move into yet, with the price heavily affected by the life expectancy of the current tenant.

In essence rent control creates a political property right in occupancy of a rent-controlled apartment. But the only way to enjoy this property right is to occupy the apartment. Since ending rent control is politically impossible, the solution is to let people keep the benefit without keeping the apartment. In other words, let them sell or rent their rent-control rights. If an apartment worth $2,000 a month is renting for $500 (not at all implausible), those rights would go for $1,500 a month or a lump sum of at least $100,000. Without raising the tenant's rent a penny, you would increase his "opportunity cost" of staying in the apartment to the market rate of $2,000. He might well move out.

The most likely buyer would be the landlord himself, who then would have an unencumbered apartment to rent or sell. In fact, one variation would be to limit buy-back rights to landlords. This would avoid the problem of deciding how long the controls should continue once the tenant has moved out. Tenant and landlord can negotiate that, based on their assumptions about how long the tenant otherwise would have stayed (or lived).

This solution may seem unfair to landlords (though no more unfair than the current system). Why should they have to buy back their own apartments? But besides the political obstacles to any other way out of the rent-control morass, there is a certain rough justice at work here. As my favorite economic writer, Henry George, explained a century ago in his classic *Progress and Poverty*, real estate is not like other commodities. When an occupied apartment becomes more valuable, it's not because of the efforts and enterprise of the landlord. It's the result of social forces he had nothing to do with. Nowhere is this more true than in New York City.

In Henry George's analysis, most property rights are essentially political. He would make short shrift of the claims of landlords *and* tenants *and* taxi drivers. He's never had much influence, and you can see why.

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2 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... About isolationism, abortion, &c.

4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... POLITICAL PROPERTY RIGHTS
Cabs, apartments, and Henry George.

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... NOT ONLY JEWS
Some human rights activists and Jewish leaders are developing tunnel vision about the Soviet Union.

NOTEBOOK
The Star Wars investment strategy, &c.

9 **LEON WIESELTIER** ..... THE WRONG WAR
Why Israel should leave Lebanon fast.

10 **MICHAEL WALZER** ..... HOLD THE JUSTICE
What's wrong with prisons for profit.

12 **STEPHEN J. SOLARZ** ..... LAST CHANCE FOR THE PHILIPPINES
Here we go again. A corrupt dynasty degenerates, and a guerrilla insurgency grows. Let's avoid the usual mistakes, shall we?

17 **FRED BARNES** ..... MEET MARIO THE MODERATE
The People's Hero of San Francisco is much more of a practical politician than he likes to pretend.

21 **CHARLES MURRAY & ROBERT GREENSTEIN** ..... THE GREAT SOCIETY: AN EXCHANGE
The controversy over *Losing Ground* continues.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: HIGH ON HIGH SCHOOL
The Sure Thing, another in the teen trend.

25 **MARK LILLA** ..... THE GREAT MUSEUM MUDDLE
Very popular now, museums are very confused too.

30 **HENDRIK HERTZBERG** ..... CHICKEN McMENCKEN
The Liberal Crack-Up
by R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr.

33 **STANLEY HOFFMANN** ..... PROFILE IN COURAGE
Pierre Mendès France
by Jean Lacouture
translated by George Holoch

36 **FOUAD AJAMI** ..... A TALE OF TYRANNY
Shah of Shahs
by Ryszard Kapuściński

38 **CLARENCE BROWN** ..... CRITIC IN HIDING
Mikhail Bakhtin
by Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist

40 **HEATHER McHUGH** ..... POEM *Vacation*

40 **ALFRED CORN** ..... THE POET AS PRIVATE EYE
Henry Purcell in Japan: Poems
by Mary Jo Salter

43 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... SCREENS, STATUES, STADIUM

COVER by Robert Grossman for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 17.

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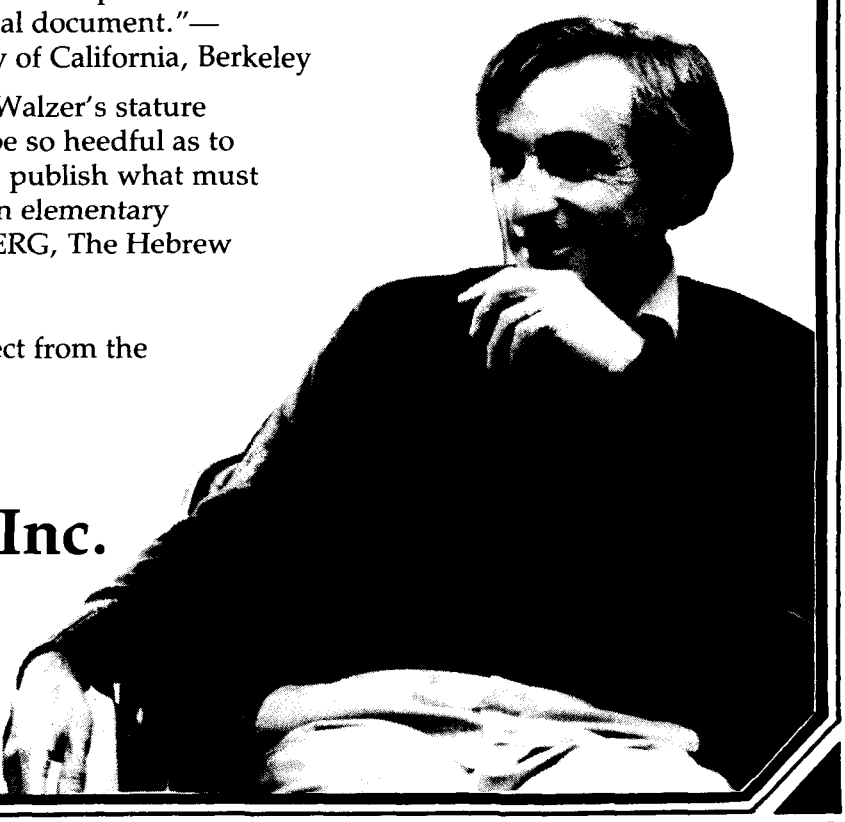

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 8, 1985

NOT ONLY JEWS

In Howard Fast's *The Naked God*, a memoir of his disenchantment with Communism, there is a revealing vignette. Whenever Fast met his friend, the high Soviet cultural apparatchik, at international assemblies of fellow-travelers, he would ask about other friends, some Yiddish writers in Moscow. The apparatchik invariably would report that they were in good health and good cheer. Fast took this as conclusive evidence that widespread fears about Soviet anti-Semitism were unfounded. Then Fast found out that his friends were all dead, murdered—despite the festival airs they wrote for Stalin—during a far-reaching campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" and Zionists. Fast confronted a *Pravda* correspondent, demanding to know why he had been deceived. The Russian impatiently responded: "Why do you make so much of the Jews? Jews! Jews! That is all we hear from you! Do you think Stalin murdered no one but Jews?"

At last a Soviet official was telling the truth. And Stalin's successor regimes also have persecuted not only Jews, but Christians and Moslems and democrats and poets and others who have tried to find some private or communal refuge in an otherwise wholly ideologized tyranny. Not to mention the generalized oppression of all its citizens that is the essence of the Soviet system. It is important for Americans, and American Jews in particular, to keep the *Pravda* correspondent's maxim in mind.

It's true that among all the oppressed groups in the Soviet Union, the Jews have been inordinately singled out, stereotyped, and scapegoated, and been made targets of propaganda, prosecution, and psychiatric imprisonment. The Jewish obsession seems intrinsic to both Russia and Marxism; the animus predates the revolution, but it has persisted nearly 70 years into Communist rule. The Hebrew language is illegal, its teachers criminally prosecuted and jailed. No religion is so systematically kept from practicing its customs and perpetuating its own learning and rituals. The individual Jew now has less access to education and employment than at any point since 1917; the notorious quotas of Czarist times have been reinstated, if anything more harshly. A Jew's roots may go back hundreds of years in what is now Soviet territory, but still the Jew is "alien" and labeled as much right on his or her internal passport.

It is only natural, then, that Jews outside the Soviet Union and true devotees of human rights everywhere should—even while trying to secure for Jews whatever sparse rights are vouchsafed other Soviet citizens—also secure for them the right to leave. Hence the agitation supporting the upward of 500,000 souls—from one-quarter to one-third of Russian Jewry—who want desperately to go. It is also only natural that activists for Soviet Jewry should want to seize whatever opportunity is provided by the present change in the Soviet leadership to wrest some Jews from their captivity.

But in the frantic grasping for good signs about the new leadership, which looks to us much like the old, many of these well-meaning people are making themselves look foolish. And some are doing more than what is natural and more than what is decent. They are offering Mikhail Gorbachev a deal: the emigration of Jews in exchange for U.S. trade, an exchange of Jews for a renewal of détente. Take this advertisement in the March 5 *Washington Post* (a strange place to communicate with the Moscow leadership):

> Last year was bad for Soviet Jews. Less than 900 were allowed to leave. . . . Nevertheless, we believe many people in this country would be responsive to positive changes, especially in your emigration policy. Why should emigration continue to be a barrier to improved trade and investment relations, and to expanded cultural and scientific exchange?

Sponsored by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry in association with the American Jewish Commmittee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the document reflects views gaining currency in Jewish leadership circles. It also seems to express publicly the gist of private diplomacy being carried on between Soviet and Jewish leaders.

Well maybe this is good for the Jews of Russia, though maybe not. But what about the Soviet citizens whose rescue is not a part of the proposed transaction? What about

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those left in Russia for whom no one speaks? The National Council of Churches may be indifferent to the fate of Baptists and Evangelicals and Jehovah's Witnesses, but that is no reason for others to be. Likewise, the Islamic regimes have turned their backs on 60 million Moslem brethren in Soviet Asia, so as not to jeopardize their anti-Israel alliance with Moscow, but that's no reason for others to turn their backs as well. And just because no one cares for the dozens of endangered ethnic and national groups submerged under Soviet rule—truly captive nations, these, with no diaspora to invoke their destiny in world capitals—this doesn't justify a human rights transaction made exclusively for Jews.

What would an expanded cultural exchange look like if it were to be accompanied by a stream of departing Russian Jews and a torrent of Russian bombs over Afghanistan? And how would the Jewish organizations feel if the Soviets were to compensate the Arabs for the new Russian Jews arrived in Israel with an even more mischievous Middle Eastern policy?

This proposed arrangement is not just morally obtuse. It's politically obtuse, too. It suggests in the grossest possible way what anti-Semites have always charged: that Jews care only about Jews. This is not to insist on a spurious universalist solidarity. But there are some narrow goals that are just too narrow. It is not even clear how realistic they are. Could the Soviets be trusted to honor such a bargain over the long haul? And if they don't, would the Jewish organizations then be back to public opinion and to Congress to try to cancel the arrangement? Jewish organizations have played a key role, we believe rightly, in pressing for a firmer policy toward the Soviet Union. But that firmer policy was intended as a response to a whole series of Soviet provocations, of which the oppression of the Jews is but one.

There is also something quite haughty in Jewish organizations purporting to be able to deliver on these incentives to Moscow. We don't understand why these organizations would want Gorbachev to think they can deliver. It is an anti-Semitic fantasy, now widely believed in the Communist and Third Worlds, that the key to American policy is Jewish opinion.

Like almost everybody else in American society, Jews have plural social identities. The fears of certain American Jewish organizations (the American Jewish Congress, for example, in a recent report) that the Jews of America have become too single-minded in their political concern about Israel are misplaced; it's just not so. But those Jewish leaders who have set out to strike bargains with the Soviet Union represent precisely that kind of single-mindedness. Indeed, they combine the worst features of special-interest politics with the most naive features of liberal foreign policy. It is difficult enough to make foreign policy in a democracy without having various groups within it (the Jews are not the only sinners in this regard) set out to do their diplomacy for themselves. The American contest with the Soviet Union, political and philosophical, is a grave matter, and it is bigger than them all.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE ABORTION DEBATE has been heavily influenced by the pro-life movie *The Silent Scream*. (See "Right-to-Life Porn" by Jefferson Morley, March 25.) Now it turns out that the film's evidence is flawed. "CBS Morning News" showed the sonogram last week to five qualified obstetricians. They all denied that a 12-week-old fetus could feel pain, react to the intrusion of the suction tube, or open its mouth to "scream." Their most significant point was that, when the film claims the fetus is starting to struggle, it is actually only showing the speeding up of the film. One of the doctors said: "Any of us could show you the same image in a fetus who is not being aborted." If the anti-abortion case was as clear-cut as its publicists say, they wouldn't have to distort the evidence to make their point.

□ PHOTO FINISH: There's a fitting epilogue to our recent press story about the petty removal of Leslie Gelb's portrait from the State Department office where Gelb served as director of Politico-Military Affairs during the Carter administration. Secretary of State George Shultz was asked to comment on the episode and he stated the obvious truth: that Mr. Gelb, the national security correspondent for *The New York Times*, "is an able journalist and a patriotic person." Now all that remains is for Shultz to tell the current occupant of Gelb's former office, Lt. Gen. John Chain, to kindly put Gelb's picture back up.

□ HARVARD MAGAZINE, the alumni bimonthly, knows what's *really* at stake in the Star Wars debate. In the March-April issue, the "Money Matters" column reports on how to get rich off the Strategic Defense Initiative. "The whole effort is very bullish for the Department of Defense's very high-speed integrated circuit effort, of which Texas Instruments is a leader," according to stock analysts. And don't despair if Congress seemingly votes down the program. "Approval for a program may involve as many as eighteen separate stages. . . . The press often exaggerates the importance of one of these decisions, and investors overreact to the bad news . . . over time the constituency that develops around an established program makes it very hard for Congress to abandon." How true. We say, sell your arms control futures.

□ MORE MEDLEY: At a recent Aspen Institute conclave, "The World: 1985 and Beyond," J. William Medley, author of the syndicated column "Conventional Wisdom," offered this timely point: "We need not succumb to wishful thinking about the true nature of the Soviet system to welcome Gorbachev's entrance onto the stage of world history. Once again force of personality—the firm handshake, the pretty and poised wife—reminds us that all of us on this planet are human. Like his predecessors, Gorbachev arrives dressed in the gray cloth of monolithic Marxist-Leninism. But his is a brighter gray, and with a more

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stylish cut. His new style is, like the old style, composed of contradictions. It embodies the paradox that both continuity and the possibility of change are ever-present, even in a totalitarian society. Gorbachev is soft-spoken yet blunt, innovative yet traditional, accommodating yet firm. We must learn to live with him—and he with us."

Israel meets Iran in Lebanon.

THE WRONG WAR

"WE MUST TAKE into account, in the implementation of the redeployment, a perception of the future as well: How will we live along the northern border with reasonable security for our settlements?" Thus the Israeli minister of defense. May 1982? Alas, no; March 1985. Yitzhak Rabin uttered these tenebrous words last week. They comprise nothing less than the final admission of the futility of the Lebanon war, and the final reason for Israel to leave, at once and at last, the savage hills beyond its borders. Its soldiers have nothing to do there but die.

It has long been apparent that "Operation Peace in Galilee" failed in many of its objectives. Syria was not humbled, but heightened. The reconstruction of Lebanon that Ariel Sharon promised to produce in a busy week looks now (as, to some, it looked then) like the most irresponsible of illusions, as the confessional cleavages of that poor polity continue to make it crumble. Still, at least peace in Galilee may have been accomplished by "Peace in Galilee." But now that, too, seems no longer sure. The Shiites of southern Lebanon are aroused and they are ambushing Israelis. Since Israel began its withdrawal, about two dozen soldiers have perished at the hands of terrorists, many of them in an attack that took place only a few hundred yards from Israeli territory. (Since the banishment of the PLO from Beirut in September 1982, well over a hundred Israelis have been killed in Lebanon.) To this the Israelis responded with surprise—for years the Shiites of the south were their allies, represented by the person and the force of Major Sa'ad Haddad, and the invading Israeli battalions of the summer of 1982 were warmly welcomed; and then the Israelis responded with a policy they called "the iron fist," a particularly emphatic application of the customary Israeli doctrine that violence will be met with violence.

Why the surprise? The warm welcome of 1982 was simply the sensible and self-interested hospitality of the liberated for the liberators. The PLO had occupied southern Lebanon, and ruled it repressively; and the Israelis had put an end to the occupation. But an Israeli occupation is another occupation, and nothing else. It is no wonder that it has become an object of hostility. And why "the iron fist"? An iron fist is precisely what the Shiite extremists dream of. Of course, the response to terrorism must be physical, as the Israelis have demonstrated over the years. But these are not the sorts of terrorists for whom that tried and tested theory was designed. It is precisely the provocation and the punishment that pleases them, because it ratifies their reason for making this war against the Jewish state. And this reason should give pause, because it is the new and unprecedentedly fearful factor in Israel's security situation.

SOMETHING SIMPLE and staggering happened in the Shiite world since the good old days of the Christian Major Haddad's friendly Shiite force. It was the Iranian revolution. *That* is what Israel now faces. The most catastrophic consequence of the war in Lebanon may well be that it has created a border between Israel and Iran. In many respects that is a much more alarming arrangement than the border between Israel and the PLO. Shiite terrorism is different in character from Palestinian terrorism. The Palestinians had murderers who wished to kill. The Shiites have murderers who wish to die. The PLO, in many ways, is an abomination; but its reason for being is something that even many Israelis understand. It is a rather familiar phenomenon—the evil extreme of a national frustration, of an obvious political and historical perplexity. Not so the Shiite extremism empowered in Iran and emboldened in Lebanon. Its motives for murder are not this-worldly. They are mystical and metaphysical; the car-bombing of Israeli soldiers is inspired by a chiliastic demand of the world for which there can be no merely political or diplomatic satisfaction. The presence of the American Marines in Beirut provided Khomeini with the opportunity to open a war with the Great Satan. The great miscalculation of American policymakers: they never saw that the significance of the American landing was to be sought not in the Lebanese context, but in the Iranian context. Similarly, the presence of Israel in southern Lebanon provides Khomeini (or more generally, Khomeinism) with the opportunity to open a war against the Lesser Satan. At least there is the war with Iraq to distract the Imam.

Nor is that all. The PLO in Lebanon was, as they used to say, a state within a state; it was a foreign body living parasitically upon the delicate Lebanese organism. There could be a solution in expulsion. The Shiites, however, are at home. They cannot be expelled. For the next few months the Israelis' task, therefore, is an impossible one: to control an indigenous population that detests them. And this population, moreover, is the majority population of the country. Not for the first time in recent memory, Israeli policy in Lebanon is unpardonably ignorant of the pertinent past. The history of southern Lebanon has always been a special chapter in the history of Lebanon. The region is religiously, culturally, and politically apart—so much so, for example, that during the 1930s Emile Eddé, the Christian president of Lebanon, campaigned for "the territorial reduction of Lebanon" by means of the "amputation" of its southern Shiite territory. (In 1946 Eddé asked Chaim Weizmann to consider the incorporation of southern Lebanon into the Jewish state!) In the decades that

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followed, the Shiites of southern Lebanon were steadily radicalized. The critical figure in their radicalization was Musa al-Sadr, Iranian born and Iranian educated, who built a powerful Shiite movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s that mixed political militancy with religious millenarianism. It was he who founded the Amal (the name now trips easily from the tongues of anchorpeople everywhere) in 1975, a secret army consecrated to social justice and the destruction of Israel. (In 1978 al-Sadr disappeared in mysterious circumstances in Libya, but not in circumstances too mysterious to be called a martyrdom. For the Shiites of Lebanon he is an Imam.) The Israelis were fixated on Major Haddad and his stopgap assurances. They should have been fixated on Musa al-Sadr and his influential invocations of Karbala. It was he who exemplified the evolution of Israel's Shiite neighbors.

The Israelis are confronted, in short, with something rather more complicated than a temporary problem of public order. Every day that they dawdle in Lebanon they make their security still more hostage to the spiritual seethings of the Shiite restoration. What, then, are the reasons for their slow withdrawal? I have heard two. First, that Israel must not show weakness. Second, that Israel must not allow the terrorists to determine its course of action. These are both ridiculous; indeed, they are excuses for the extension of any error. Since when is a show of sense a show of weakness? For surely it is a show of sense for Israel to make a cool calculation of profit and loss about its present position in the north. That is just the sort of calculation that a mature and militarily masterful state must be able to make. And surely Israel's record of retaliation will not be lost upon any individual, movement, or state contemplating a strike against it; as Moshe Dayan tactlessly used to say, the Israel Defense Forces can always return. Finally, remaining within the reach of terrorism in order not to let terrorism determine your course of action is a way of letting terrorism determine your course of action.

The combustion of Lebanese Shiite nationalism and Iranian Shiite messianism is nothing that the Israeli army can do a damn thing about. It can only make a bad situation worse. For the wretched and inflamed radicals of southern Lebanon, the soldiers of Israel are simply stairways to heaven. At present, then, Israel's soldiers are in Lebanon on the most abject mission of all. Like the American Marines in Beirut, they are there for the sole purpose of defending themselves. Prime Minister Shimon Peres would do well to turn a deaf ear to the demagogues who preach toughness. Toughness against what—the history of Islam? They are no friends of Israel who counsel cockiness about Khomeinism. No, short-term thinking and the appeal to toughness have cost Israel in Lebanon too much already. Again the PLO is thwarting the prospects for Middle East peace, and again the Israeli government is worrying about the safety of the northern towns: not much to show for more than 600 dead. Israel's tired troops should go home.

LEON WIESELTIER

At McPrison and Burglar King, it's . . .

HOLD THE JUSTICE

ACCORDING TO a recent article in *The New York Times*, there are now some two dozen privately owned and run prisons in the United States, and the number is likely to double in the next year or so. The idea of "privatization," championed by Reagan administration officials and publicists, has evidently taken hold—and it has taken hold in a strange place. One somehow imagined that even a minimal state, stripped of all its welfare functions, would still have a police force and a prison system of its own. But private prisons, so the argument goes, are much cheaper to run than public prisons, and the owners can still make a profit; we need such men and their good works. Here are our convicts: *enrichissez-vous*!

We ought to be talking about the barbarous conditions that exist in many prisons, the swelling population of young and minor offenders, alternative forms of custody and control. But the argument from cheapness, in these mean times, is not surprising; it may even be true. Entrepreneurs in the incarceration business will probably be bound by less rigorous building and safety codes; they won't have to pay union wages and pensions; they will more easily skimp on the training of guards and the care of (more and more) prisoners. But if all this makes for economic efficiency, what does it do to justice?

I am inclined to concede the cheapness issue. It is not unimportant; but economic arguments cannot be the crucial ones. The Vietnam War could probably have been fought more cheaply if General Westmoreland had fielded a private army, without 20-year retirements, short-term tours of combat duty, extensive rest and recreation facilities—and without nagging reporters and nervous politicians. The idea is, nonetheless, unattractive. The U.S. government could conceivably raise more money if it farmed out the income tax to the private sector. Entrepreneurs in the collection business might well display what one supporter of private prisons claims for their eager operators: "a vitality that is sometimes lacking in civil servants." The degree of vitality would presumably depend upon the likelihood of profit. But once again the idea is unattractive. Encounters with the tax collector would be even more difficult than they are today if we knew that our deductions were also his profit margin. He would be nothing more, in that case, than another competitor, another market antagonist, grasping for our money.

Private prisons pose similar difficulties but in a much sharper form: for imprisonment, unlike taxation (or conscription), is a way of punishing people, singling out some but not others, not only for painful but also for dishonorable and degrading treatment. How do

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we ever acquire a right to do that? The question goes to the heart of the state's legitimacy; it is a moral and political—not economic—question.

The strongest democratic defense of the right to punish goes roughly like this. When we agree to the laws (participate in making them or in electing representatives who make them) we accept the proposition that if we ever break the law we ought to be punished. Criminals are punished, then, with their own consent. And if this isn't active and explicit consent, then it is constructive and tacit: for the criminal has lived under and enjoyed the benefits of the laws, and could have participated in the making of those laws. Criminals are fellow citizens; when we punish them we presume upon the fellowship. (When we punish aliens or visitors we presume upon a kind of guest fellowship.)

But if this is right, then it is crucial that the agents of punishment be agents of the laws and of the people who make them. Though it may sound paradoxical, the criminal is punished by his own agents—who are ours too. That's why private punishment is ruled out. We can't be judges or police or jailers in our own name or for our own purposes. It is only some public purpose, which the criminal could share—which as a fellow citizen, he does share—that justifies punishment. Men and women who have been injured by a criminal may have good reasons to want him punished, but he isn't punished for those reasons or by those people but rather for reasons we all share and by representative officials.

Police and prison guards are our representatives, whose activities we have authorized. The policeman's uniform symbolizes his representative character. When he puts on his uniform, he strips himself bare, so to speak, of his private opinions and motivations. Ideally, at least, he is equally energetic in enforcing laws that he does and doesn't like and he treats all citizens, and all criminals, in the same way, whatever his personal prejudices. When the police behave in this way, impersonally enforcing the general will, their coercive powers are justified. They may annoy us or frustrate us or even, sometimes, frighten us, but they don't oppress us.

CONSIDER A TRIVIAL but useful example: if, speeding down the highway, I am stopped by someone I can recognize (though I know nothing else about him) as a uniformed representative of the democratic state, I should not and probably will not feel resentful. But if I suspect that I have been stopped because of the color of my skin or the political tone of my bumper stickers, or because the policeman hopes for a bribe, then resentment and anger are the right response. Policemen with private motives are dangerous.

Not only private motives: corporate motives are dangerous too. If the group of policemen, or any subgroup among them, has purposes in mind different from the purposes we had in mind when we created a police force, justice is corrupted. Obviously, then, justice is often corrupted; our impersonal representatives turn out to be ordinary persons; they have careers, interests, feelings of their own. But we are protected against their selfishness and against their private angers and resentments, at least to some degree, by the professional ethic and internal safeguards of the civil service, by legislative oversight committees and civilian review boards, and finally by the courts, which uphold the law even, or especially, against the agents of the law.

WE CAN NOW see clearly what is wrong with the private prison. It exposes the prisoners to private or corporate purposes, and it sets them at some distance from the protection of the law. The critical exposure is to profit-taking at the prisoners' expense, and given the conditions under which they live, they are bound to suspect that they are regularly used and exploited. For aren't the purposes of their private jailers different from the purposes of the courts that sent them to jail? All the internal rules and regulations of their imprisonment, the system of discipline and reward, the hundreds of small decisions that shape their daily lives, are open now to a single unanswerable question: Is this punishment or economic calculation, the law or the market?

There are bound to be other questions too, not only about corporate profit-taking but also about private willfulness and caprice. Theorists of free enterprise insist that the market is a disciplinary agent, enforcing rational if not benevolent behavior; but the history of the pre-union factory suggests how ineffective this discipline is at the local level, how much room it leaves for petty tyranny. It is in part because prisoners can't form unions that we, who put them in prison, must accept responsibility for their treatment. How can we teach them their own responsibilities if we evade ours, leaving them to endure what is bound to feel like one more racket?

Even if the market provided some initial control over the treatment of prisoners, it is unlikely to be effective for very long. Once a large private company has built and is operating a number of "facilities," holding thousands of men and women, the state is hardly in a position to break the contract and turn to some upstart entrepreneur with nothing to offer but a bid and a plan. At that point, competition won't do its work: the prison industry will turn out to look very much like the defense industry. This suggests that cost effectiveness may well be a short-term business, but that's not, again, the crucial point. It's more important that cleanliness, safety, and ordinary decency will almost certainly decline over the years. Helpless men and women have never fared well in the hands of profit-seeking entrepreneurs. The incentive system is all wrong. Who will look after the interests of prisoners? Who who will be watching the prison owners as they run their "own" business?

Perhaps the courts will be watching. There are already

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indications that the courts will treat public and private prisons as legally identical institutions. How can they do otherwise? Imprisonment is a state action, and so is every decision made, whoever makes it, about the course and character of imprisonment. All such decisions are subject to constitutional norms, and the courts will do what they can to enforce those norms. The enforcement will probably be more roundabout, and will take longer and be harder to monitor, in private than in public prisons. It is not all that effective now, but at least it offers the hope of legal protection.

This is probably the chief economic advantage of privatization—that it shuts down this hope, that it offers a (temporary) escape from the enforcement of constitutional norms. The resulting savings are like the profit added when a factory moves from union to non-union territory. If the union catches up, the old situation is restored. Similarly, if the courts catch up, we will find ourselves again where we are now, with judges struggling to do what state legislatures and Congress ought to do—reform the prison system. It will turn out that we haven't privatized the prisons so much as deputized the "owners" and all their employees.

Perhaps, indeed, we should deputize nongovernmental agencies to perform some prison-like functions. The present system is so awful that we all might benefit, prisoners too, from a little flexibility, unorthodoxy, experimentation. But this will have to be the work of nonprofit agencies, with publicly recognized programs and explicit authorization. We should not be contracting out, as if these were not *our* prisoners; we should be bringing new ideas into the orbit of the public service. The argument from democratic theory need not commit us to prisons as they now exist or to a single pattern of bureaucratic organization. The argument commits us only to political responsibility. So long as we send men and women to prison, we have to pay attention to what happens to them once they are there. It may be a sad truth, but it is a truth nonetheless: in a democracy, the prisons belong to the people.

MICHAEL WALZER

A corrupt dynasty, a guerrilla insurgency, U.S. military bases—sound familiar?

LAST CHANCE FOR THE PHILIPPINES

BY STEPHEN J. SOLARZ

THE SCRIPT IS painfully familiar: a vain and increasingly isolated leader, an ineffectual and autocratic regime, a people plagued by poverty and deprived of democracy, a Communist movement mounting a potent political and military challenge. This time the scene is the Philippines, where the ghosts of Chiang Kai-shek, Fulgencio Batista, Ngo Dinh Diem, Nguyen Van Thieu, and Anastasio Somoza haunt the Malacanang Palace of Ferdinand Marcos.

The 10,000 to 20,000 peasant guerrillas of the Communist New People's Army are not yet in a position to take over Manila. But the guerrillas do not lack for recruits, and their leaders have skillfully shaped a strategy of rural revolution and urban encirclement. If current political and economic trends continue, by the end of the decade these Filipino Maoists are likely to pose a serious and perhaps irresistible challenge to the government of the Philippines.

A victory by the Communist guerrillas would eliminate whatever hope there is in the Philippines for the restoration of democracy. In power the Communist forces would surely carry out a far more systematic campaign of repression than the episodic variety practiced by Ferdinand Marcos. For the United States, a guerrilla triumph would destroy a historically close relationship with the Philippines, and would close off access to Clark Field and Subic Bay. These two facilities form the key element of our forward defense strategy in the Pacific. They play an essential role in our ability to preserve the peace and maintain a balance of power in Asia. The loss of Clark and Subic would generate—in Washington, Moscow, and all Asian capitals—a rapid rethinking of the Pacific security equation, with results potentially far more serious than those following the fall of Saigon in 1975.

Because of the unique and long-standing ties between our two peoples, the United States is inextricably involved and inevitably influential in the Philippines. The Filipino people will determine their own future, but the United States, no matter what it does, will exert a strong influence. The Reagan administration now seems to have awakened to the seriousness of the crisis in the Philip-

Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, Democrat of New York, is chairman of the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs.

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pines, but it will probably be up to Congress to shape an American policy that can avoid disaster.

PRESIDENT MARCOS'S power base has now shrunk to the point where his support is largely restricted to his own family, a handful of close associates, and a few favored military and political appointees. The virtually complete collapse of confidence in his regime can be traced to several factors. A principal cause has been the system of "crony capitalism" he has established to enrich his political allies. Perfecting the art of politically connected plunder to a degree undreamed of by President Mobutu of Zaire and other expert practitioners of the trade, Ferdinand Marcos and his associates have diverted millions of dollars from critical development needs for their private purposes. (See "The Marcos Mafia" by Robert A. Manning, June 25, 1984.) Over half the Filipinos live in poverty, but intimates of the first family have been able to live in imperial splendor.

Jaime Cardinal Sin, the head of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, summed up the sentiments of many Filipinos when he recalled the statement of Manuel Quezon, the Philippines' first president, who once said, "I would rather have a government run like hell by Filipinos than a government run like heaven by Americans." The cardinal then added, "Today . . . it would seem his wish has been fulfilled." Responding to this and other frequent criticisms by the cardinal, Marcos publicly complained that the cardinal was beginning to sound like the Ayatollah Khomeini. To which Cardinal Sin retorted, "If I am the ayatollah, then Marcos must be the shah."

Economic policy-making in the House of Marcos resembles the mercantilist dynasties of late medieval Europe. Individuals who demonstrate their fealty to the first family are granted resources or foreign-loan guarantees for investment projects they propose with little regard to the feasibility of the ventures or the managerial ability of their sponsors. When projects run into financial trouble, the government usually makes new loans or buys out the enterprises outright, saddling itself with bad debts or unprofitable companies.

The most egregious manifestation of crony capitalism is found in the economic monopolies. By presidential decree Marcos imposed a 75-percent tariff on imported cigarette filters, benefiting a palace intimate who owned most of the local cigarette manufacturing factories. For coconuts and sugar, presidential favorites enjoy the sole right of distribution, and are free to determine the spread between the price at which crops are purchased from growers and the rate at which they are sold on the market. The livelihood of 15 million to 20 million people—one-third of the populace—depends on coconut production. Enormous sums of money that otherwise would have been available to coconut farmers have instead been siphoned off by associates of the president.

The rise of crony capitalism has been one of the fundamental factors in the decline of the Philippines' economy. In the last year its free-market neighbors have enjoyed a dynamic economic growth; the Philippines have experienced a decline of five-and-a-half percent in GNP. At the same time, income inequality has become even more pronounced. Nevertheless, President Marcos has continued to spend huge sums to replicate the external trappings of far more developed countries: lavish government offices, large cultural showplaces, and highly specialized medical centers.

History demonstrates, however, that the poor do not rebel solely because of economic misery and willful mismanagement. Political repression is usually required for spontaneous social combustion. Here, too, the Marcos regime has created the conditions for its own demise.

UNTIL THE LATE 1960s the Philippines had a working democratic system, although one plagued by corruption and violence. Then in the early 1970s instability spread as radical university students demonstrated for a variety of causes, and separatist Moslems on the southern island of Mindanao fought for an independent state. Many Filipinos came to believe that the existing system was too corrupt and ineffective to handle the mounting problems. In September 1972, seven years after Marcos assumed the presidency, he declared martial law.

Had Marcos been content to purge the system of its anarchic tendencies and restore democracy, he would be regarded today as a national hero. He did take positive steps such as the confiscation of privately owned arms and the dissolution of local politicians' private militias. But he and his retainers chose also to use their extraordinary powers to perpetuate the rule of the Marcos dynasty. Thousands of government critics—including the charismatic Benigno Aquino—were arrested. Civilian courts were supplanted by military tribunals oblivious of due process of law. Freedom of assembly, speech, and the press ceased to exist.

Since 1972 political repression has spread through the countryside. To cope with the Moslem separatists and the nascent Communist New People's Army, the armed forces of the Philippines increased from 50,000 to 150,000 between 1972 and 1977. Quality declined as quantity grew. The professionalism of the Philippine officer corps gave way to factionalism and corruption. Within the ranks, training, discipline, and morale have suffered. Standards have also sunk in the constabulary, the government's first line of defense in rural areas.

Attempting to end the rural insurgency, the armed forces and the constabulary have usually shot first and asked questions later. Suspected Communists are given no mercy, and the word "salvaging" (a Filipino phrase meaning summary execution) has become part of the village vocabulary. The government borrowed the idea of strategic hamlets (employed unsuccessfully by the United States in Vietnam) in order to cut off the guerrillas from the civilian populace. The effect has been to disrupt village life and impose harsh restrictions on farm families already suffering from misguided economic policies. The guerrillas could not have asked for a better stimulus to recruit-

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ment than the pervasive pattern of human rights abuses by government forces.

The Communist Party of the Philippines was founded in December 1968, a Maoist splinter of the long-established, Moscow-oriented party. Adopting Mao's strategy of a rural-based people's war, the Communist Party created the New People's Army a few months later. Over the last decade, the Communists have transformed their movement from a tiny insurgency, with a force of a few hundred troops limited to the island of Luzon, into a nationwide insurrection.

Today the Communist Party has a membership of 30,000 and the guerrilla army has from 10,000 to 15,000 men under arms. The guerrillas are active in over two-thirds of the country's provinces, and have established a presence in one-third of the *barangays*, the lowest administrative unit in the Philippines. In the last year alone the number of military incidents initiated by the guerrilla army almost doubled. In the cities, the Communist Party's National Democratic Front can mobilize non-Communist student, human rights, and church-related organizations—and up to a million people—for demonstrations and other antigovernment activities.

This degree of Communist success is remarkable for two reasons. First, it goes against the democratic grain of Filipino culture and political history. Second, there is no evidence of financial or weapons support from foreign governments, although the Soviet Union and China would undoubtedly compete to establish control over the party if it seemed on the verge of victory.

The guerrilla army's appeal in rural areas is not based on ideology, but on the sense of grievance that the government's brutality, corruption, and inefficiency have created. In addition, the guerrillas often provide the basic services to the poor that Manila seems incapable of delivering. Like the security forces, the guerrilla army engages in violence. But unlike the Philippine military, which is random in its brutality, it directs its violence against officials and soldiers known to be corrupt and ordinary citizens who actively oppose its aims and activities. Guerrilla units recently have targeted the properties of Marcos's cronies for destruction, with telling political effect.

IN THE PHILIPPINES, as in medieval monarchies, the health of the ruler becomes the engine of change. It was Marcos's deteriorating medical condition that both moved Aquino to return to his homeland and presumably provoked elements in the Philippine government to engineer his assassination on the tarmac of the Manila airport. That event galvanized the democratic opposition, energized the previously apathetic masses, and thrust the government into a political and economic crisis from which it has yet to emerge. Marcos came under intense pressure to allow an open and objective investigation of the murder, to ensure that the May 1984 elections to the National Assembly would be free and fair, to institute the austerity measures necessary to get an agreement from the International Monetary Fund as well as new external loans, to

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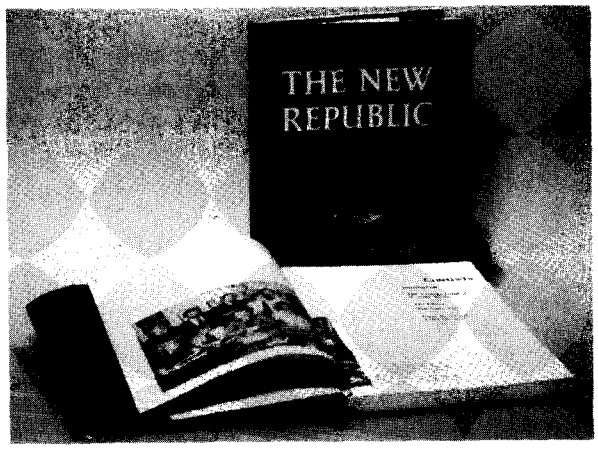

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make clearer arrangements for presidential succession should he die, and even to resign from office.

The concessions were made grudgingly and constituted the minimum necessary to satisfy the demands made. Nevertheless, the measures adopted were not trivial. The constitution was amended to clarify succession procedures. An investigating board charged Fabian Ver, a Marcos loyalist and armed forces chief of staff, with complicity in the assassination and subsequent cover-up. And the Philippines reached an agreement with the IMF and commercial banks that should stop the downward economic spiral.

Perhaps most important, elections conducted last May were reasonably fair in two-thirds to three-quarters of the election districts, primarily because 150,000 citizens volunteered to prevent government abuse. Yet irregularities in the remaining districts had a profound effect on the results. Candidates of the democratic opposition captured one-third of the assembly seats; a citizen poll-watchers group concluded that had the tally been totally honest, they would have won a majority. The May 1984 elections demonstrated that the Filipino people *want* democracy, not that democracy has been restored.

For the democratic opposition, the Aquino assassination meant the loss of a leader and the creation of an imperishable political symbol. Roughly four million Filipinos participated in some way in Aquino's funeral, and the democratic opposition has worked to channel that profound emotional outpouring into effective political action. In this effort, Marcos's democratic opponents have taken advantage of a significant relaxation of the restrictions on expression and assembly.

FOR THE United States the assassination provoked a reassessment of policy. Before the tragedy the Reagan administration believed that "constructive engagement," Philippine-style, was ensuring cordial relations and the speedy conclusion of a new base-and-aid agreement. In 1981 Vice President Bush went so far as to toast Marcos with the ludicrous avowal, "We love your adherence to democratic principles and to democratic processes." Roused from its complacency by Aquino's murder and the unmistakable evidence that the House of Marcos was beginning to crumble, the administration had a change of heart. It feared that a continued embrace of the Marcos government would be more likely to jeopardize than guarantee our long-term access to the facilities at Clark and Subic.

There are many countries where our strategic interests clash with our human rights concerns, and where overriding national security objectives make it difficult to effectively promote our democratic beliefs. In the Philippines, however, the best and perhaps the only means of protecting our strategic interests is by advancing the process of democratization.

The United States must first recognize what it ought *not* to do. Recalling the lessons of Iran, Nicaragua, and other American foreign policy debacles, the U.S. should repudiate any notion of propping up Ferdinand Marcos. Not only would such a policy be doomed to failure, but it would also alienate the Filipino people, thereby undermining our ability to continue operations at Clark and Subic. (The current base agreement between the United States and the Philippines expires in 1991.) Our capacity to remain at those facilities rests ultimately upon the willingness of the Filipino people to have us there.

At the other extreme, the United States should reject any notion of removing President Marcos from power, either by organizing a coup against him or by eliminating the aid program. U.S. participation in the coup against President Diem in Vietnam hardly constitutes a promising precedent on which to act in the Philippines. Overthrowing a government we do not like is no more justified in Manila than in Managua. The withholding of funds is unlikely to bring down the Marcos regime, given that the total American military and economic assistance program accounts for only three percent of the Philippines' budget. Cutting off American aid would also harm millions of desperately poor Filipinos who benefit from our assistance. In addition, terminating our assistance could potentially jeopardize our access to the bases, inasmuch as President Marcos might be tempted to take a nationalist tack and close them down, on the grounds that we had violated the base agreement.

Nor would it be useful to legislatively condition our aid on the achievement of essential reforms. Based on our experience with conditionality in El Salvador, the Reagan administration would undoubtedly certify that the prescribed conditions had been met, no matter how little actual progress had occurred. President Marcos could then claim the official American seal of approval, while the democratic opposition would find new evidence for its suspicion that the United States cares more for Marcos than for its country.

In the second presidential debate last October with Walter Mondale, President Reagan claimed that Communism was the only alternative to Ferdinand Marcos. The president's simplistic statement ignores the fact that the real alternative to Communism is not a continuation of the present regime, but a restoration of democracy. Indeed, posing the choice as the president did can only increase the prospects for an eventual Communist victory.

THE UNITED STATES can improve the prospects for democracy by strongly encouraging fundamental economic, political, and military reforms. This will help to destroy the roots of the guerrilla army's appeal and demonstrate to the Filipino people that U.S. policy is designed to help them rather than to embrace their embattled government. We should press for the dismantling of the monopolies that lie at the heart of crony capitalism. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are already insisting upon structural economic reform as a condition for new assistance, and the United States should continue to vigorously support that approach.

Specific political reforms should include the repeal of President Marcos's decree-making powers; the reconstitu-

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tion of an independent elections commission and the resumption of free and fair elections; the revival of a genuinely free press, in which the opposition is assured access to the electronic media; guarantees of free expression and free association; and the restoration of an independent judiciary.

Finally, the United States should seek an end to military abuses that have driven thousands of Filipinos into the arms of the guerrillas. The Philippine government must be pressured to rigorously improve training and instill discipline and decency in its armed forces. Corrupt officers must be dismissed and a special inspectorate should be created to investigate military corruption and human rights abuses.

To date, the Marcos regime has been unwilling to make politically painful reforms. In the twilight of his career, Marcos seems to be unaware of his country's desperate straits. For one thing, he has said that he will reinstate Chief of Staff Fabian Ver if he is acquitted in the Aquino assassination trial. Such an action would be a signal that President Marcos intends to conduct business as usual, and would probably rule out the chances of any genuine military reform.

The most effective way to persuade President Marcos to initiate reforms and convince the Filipino people that the United States is committed to their economic well-being and political freedom is through the restructuring of the American aid program. Last year Congress, convinced that the problems of the Philippines are primarily social and economic, transferred $45 million of the administration's aid request from military to economic assistance. The shift sent a signal to Marcos that significant reforms would be necessary before additional military assistance would be extended. Although Marcos has not yet heeded the message, most Filipinos seemed to regard it as a salutary effort to bring pressure on the Manila government.

President Reagan appears intent on sending a very different signal. One year later, despite the lack of significant reforms, the administration is proposing an extraordinary 150 percent increase in military assistance. Congress should sharply cut this request and sharply increase economic assistance. What's more, military aid should be limited to nonlethal purposes, and economic aid should be largely directed through the Catholic church and private voluntary organizations rather than through the Marcos regime.

There is no guarantee that an American policy structured in this fashion will succeed. But it represents perhaps the only way of influencing events in the Philippines in a manner compatible with both our interests and our ideals.

Is he the last liberal or a lost liberal?

MEET MARIO THE MODERATE

BY FRED BARNES

REMEMBER Mario Cuomo, the last full-throated liberal, the politician who electrified the Democratic convention last July with his keynote speech defending traditional liberal principles? As other leading Democrats were trimming their sails and as even Walter Mondale, in his acceptance speech, talked about "our mistakes" and promised "no laundry lists that raid our treasury," the governor of New York shot to national celebrity with a passionate attack on social inequality under President Reagan and an unabashed plea for activist government. Remember him?

Well, forget that Mario Cuomo. Meet Mario Cuomo the moderate. Or as he prefers to label himself, the "progressive pragmatist." This is the image that Cuomo and his advisers are now burnishing for him. Cuomo has complained intermittently for years about being unfairly labeled a "liberal" (though he was not heard to complain about the adulation he garnered from traditional liberals with his keynote address). Now he is adamant. And it is as if talking points had been distributed to all of Cuomo's advisers and confidants, instructing them to promote the same line: Mario is not now, and never has been, a liberal. "He's in the middle ideologically, and that's where he's comfortable," insisted a close associate. "His heart is on the left, but his wallet's on the right." Even Cuomo's arch-rival, New York City mayor Ed Koch, says, "Cuomo is fundamentally a centrist." Koch says that in trying to change his image, Cuomo is "doing what any intelligent, mainstream, rational Democrat will always do." Cuomo, characteristically, denies that there is anything new. "I haven't changed a single idea I've had," he says.

Some of Cuomo's admirers argue that the Cuomo of the keynote address was an aberration. "He did what he had to do to get Mondale elected," says Alan Chartock, an Albany political scientist who interviews Cuomo on a

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weekly radio show. "He was a good soldier. He moved to the left for the election and now he's moved back to where he was before." This is implausible, since Cuomo's speech was more progressive than anything Mondale said during the whole campaign. But if Cuomo can capitalize on the renown that speech brought him, while disowning its message, he may be perfectly positioned for the 1988 Democratic nomination: less liberal than Senator Edward Kennedy, more personable than Senator Gary Hart, better known than Senator Joseph Biden, and so on. "Cuomo's genius is that he is fast on his feet," says David M. Smick, a Republican Party strategist who advises both Representative Jack F. Kemp and Lewis Lehrman, Cuomo's opponent in 1982 for governor. "Just when you thought he was little more than the eloquent twin brother of Walter Mondale, he is showing an ability to transcend ideology without losing credibility."

In fact, he's stronger than ever. When Iowa Democrats held their off-year caucuses in February, they voted overwhelmingly to invite Cuomo to address their annual Jefferson-Jackson dinner. The vote of over 1,000 Democrats was: Cuomo, 73 percent; Hart, 15; Kennedy, 8. When administrative assistants in the House of Representatives voted in March on who would be the Democratic nominee in 1988, Cuomo won again: Cuomo, 39 percent; Hart, 25; Kennedy, 17. When several hundred political operatives gathered in Boston recently, they picked Cuomo as their favorite for the nomination. These are just straws in the wind, of course. But a national poll taken in January for David Garth, the political consultant and Cuomo adviser, found that Cuomo is a major factor in 1988 calculations. The presidential preference result: Kennedy, 30 percent; Hart, 27; Cuomo, 18. "To be 12 points behind Teddy Kennedy with 40 percent of the people not knowing who you are is a tremendous showing," Garth says with some justice.

IN 1983 and 1984 Cuomo and his strategists did nothing to discourage press stories that described him as the nation's most attractive and well-spoken liberal, a compelling new force in the Democratic Party. "How could we?" says a Cuomo associate. "Those pieces were all praising Cuomo to the hilt. Should we have quibbled over a label?" Now Cuomo is quibbling. "I never allow [reporters] to get into a label game," he says. "I always say, 'What is a liberal? What is a conservative?' " Cuomo says he does not want to be judged by "a keynote speech, an inaugural address, a cover of *The New York Times*," naming three of the building blocks of his current celebrity. The inaugural address, like the keynote speech, was regarded as fervently liberal, and the 1982 *New York Times Magazine* profile linked Cuomo to what it called "the old liberalism."

"I'm a governor," Cuomo says. "The way to judge me is by the budget. You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose." Ed Koch agrees: "The eloquent phrases are important, but they are simply part of his persona, not his total persona. His actions as governor have been mainstream America."

The new budget Cuomo unveiled in January calls for an income tax reduction of $2.1 billion over three years. "Why?" he asked. "To increase incentives, to make us more competitive. We're balancing the budget while we're doing it. We're not developing a $220 billion mortgage," a dig at President Reagan's deficit. At the same time Cuomo proposes to increase state spending by eight percent, including a $3.5 billion housing program and a ten percent boost in the basic welfare grant. In an interview for this article Cuomo cited the tax cut but didn't mention the spending increase.

Cuomo was irritated when *The New York Times* described his State of the State speech this year as an attempt to "revive the spirit of the New Deal." That speech did contain some pretty Reaganesque language. Cuomo touted his tax cut as "a clear signal to the business community of our commitment to economic growth." And he added that, "as important as the tax cut is, it's not enough. There is an equal need for financial reform, for an even greater commitment to fiscal prudence, to living within our means."

THE DAY AFTER the election last November, Cuomo mocked the absurd notion that anyone should consider him a traditional liberal. On Alan Chartock's radio show he remarked, "One of the senators, I forgot which one, is supposed to have said, 'We have read all of Governor Cuomo's speeches and they are New Deal.' I laughed. What are you when you reduce public employees by 9,000? What are you when you say need should be the criterion [for welfare benefits]? What are you when you come out for a tax cut? What are you when you refuse to raise the basic taxes? What are you when you spend more on your defense budget, which we call corrections, than any governor in history?"

In my interview Cuomo cited a precedent for combining radical rhetoric with more moderate policies. "Look at the difference between President Reagan's campaign poetry and President Reagan's governing prose. He used to talk like a radical rightist and then he governs like a moderate." Not everyone will find this description accurate or—accurate or not—worthy of emulation. But that is Cuomo's model. For those "interested in labeling my policies," he says, "simply go back to all my speeches since 1974. They have a boring consistency to them. My record is there to be seen. I've described myself as a progressive pragmatist for years."

To make it easy for reporters, Cuomo recently distributed a collection of his speeches and writings over the last ten years. As a result, he said, "reporters in Albany have stopped with this liberal stuff. They finally surrendered." This evidence largely supports Cuomo's claim. It shows him to be a dedicated centrist, a compromiser. It reveals his disdain for militantly left-wing Democrats, whom he calls a "new kind of Democrat" and blames for alienating middle-class voters. And it shows his willingness to take up issues like crime that some liberals are wary of, declaring that "the mugger has become the midnight mayor of

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the metropolis, the streets his jurisdiction, and the subways his private limousine."

The Cuomo collection features passages from his published diary of 1972, when he was mediator of a tense dispute between New York City officials pressing to locate a low-income housing project in Forest Hills, Queens, and angry residents opposed to the project. Not only did he zing George McGovern, then the Democratic presidential nominee, but he also attacked "liberals" in contemptuous language that would do a certified neoconservative proud. "Today a number of 'liberal' organizations released a statement condemning the mayor for having adopted the compromise proposal," he wrote. "Like so many other 'liberal' pronunciamentos, this one appeared to be primitively absolutist."

Running unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in 1974, Cuomo gave a speech chastising left-liberal elements in the Democratic Party for inflexibility and elitism. Liberals, Cuomo said, had driven away a "major segment of our constituency," the middle-class worker. "For some reason he felt alienated by a new Democratic Party which he thought neither understood nor related to him. He was made to feel voiceless, powerless, and frustrated. So he became a Republican or a Conservative." Democrats should "serve the poor without crushing the middle class," Cuomo said.

MARIO CUOMO BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The most conservative-sounding rhetoric in Cuomo's little booklet is in his speeches on crime. In 1977, when he lost to Koch in the mayor's race, he said, "These are good times for the mugger, the rapist, the burglar, the murderer, the kidnapper, the tax evader, the Medicaid and Medicare rip-off artist, the nursing home manipulator, the heroin and cocaine wholesaler and retailer." He advocated hiring more police. "The mugger that is arrested is back on the street before the police officer. The person mugged might not be back on the street for a long time, if ever." In 1981, as lieutenant governor, Cuomo declared that New Yorkers live in near-terror and "only an adventurer dares walk in the park at night. Homeowners have so many locks on their doors that the principal problem has become finding a way out of the house should, God forbid, a fire occur."

Cuomo got his left-liberal image largely because of his 1982 race for the governorship against Koch, his convention keynote address, and another speech last year at Notre Dame University in which he challenged the right of Catholics to impose their anti-abortion views on the nation. In 1982 Cuomo became the vehicle for the anti-Koch forces—left-wing activists, labor, blacks, the Liberal Party. They adopted him as their own, but it was Cuomo's strength upstate, which is more conservative and where mayors of New York City are never popular, that allowed him to defeat Koch. Then in the fall campaign against Republican Lewis Lehrman he adopted the conventional liberal rhetoric used by Democrats in economic hard times. As for the keynote address, Cuomo describes it now as an upbeat answer to Reagan's "philosophy of lower expectations." He asks rhetorically, "Was it giveaway programs?" Perhaps not. But the speech did use the seldom-heard language of class warfare in criticizing Reagan; it endorsed the nuclear freeze; and it condemned the government of El Salvador. That was precisely what made it so noteworthy.

Cuomo's record as governor is not one Republicans will be able to portray as dangerously left-wing. In 1983, against the wishes of liberal Democrats in the state legislature, Cuomo refused to raise income, corporate, or sales taxes to balance the budget. Instead, he raised some nuisance taxes, pared some social programs, and laid off state workers. Cuomo boasts about how he stood up to the interest groups, as other Democratic governors have not. "The progressives so-called, the NYPIRG [New York Public Interest Research Group], the student groups, the education lobby, the environmentalists all say you got to raise taxes the way Dick Celeste did [in Ohio], the way

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Bob Graham did [in Florida], the way Jim Blanchard did [in Michigan]. I said we can't raise our taxes any more. . . . The best thing you can do in government is give people a chance to earn their own bread. Better than welfare. Better than anything you can do. The closest thing to a panacea." In judging Cuomo's two years as governor, Miriam Pawel of *Newsday* reported that Cuomo had "alienated many of those who considered themselves his natural constituents. Today some of the most complimentary things being said about Cuomo are coming from traditionally conservative constituencies like the law enforcement community and the business council."

Cuomo may have stumbled recently by getting out front as a vehement opponent of the Treasury plan for federal tax reform. The day after the plan was announced, Cuomo declared that it would "pulverize" the middle class by ending the deductibility of state and local taxes. Cuomo's position has led to an entertaining squabble with Representative Jack Kemp. Cuomo snapped at Kemp for not joining his protest that the plan would hurt New York. Kemp responded by calling him "Governor Status Cuomo" and accusing him of trying to preserve high income tax rates. "I'd prefer to be 'Status Cuomo' to 'Backtrack Jack,' " Cuomo said, arguing that Kemp would "take us to 1913," when state and local taxes were made deductible. Cuomo's position may help him get reelected governor next year, but it puts him on the wrong side of a popular national issue. Lately Cuomo has been emphasizing that he doesn't oppose tax reform generally, just the particular parts he doesn't like. Of course that's what all opponents of tax reform say.

Cuomo is evasive and noncommittal when asked about foreign policy issues. Some of his advisers are urging him to keep away from foreign policy now, especially from any positions that would identify him with what one Cuomo associate calls "the McGovern-Carter foreign policy." Cuomo "realizes he has a clean slate on foreign policy," the associate said. "Why ruin it? . . . Think how he would surprise people [in 1988]. He could come out and say, 'Sure, I'm liberal on domestic issues, but look how conservative I am on foreign policy.' "

ON THE OTHER HAND, it's hard to know why Cuomo is going to all this trouble to adjust his national image, since he insists that he is not running for president. He has turned down dozens of speaking requests around the country, including the one to address the Iowa dinner. "I'd answer the question the way I have 100 times," he told me. "It really is a matter of whether you are going to run for governor or for president. You can't do both. . . . The present setup doesn't allow it." While others are feverishly pursuing the presidency, he will run for reelection as governor in 1986. "To think that you can take that on, that in the middle of it they [the Democratic contenders] will stumble and the world will turn to the east and say, 'Maybe there's a governor somewhere with bags under his eyes who fits exactly what we want'. . ." The thought apparently was too farfetched for him to complete the sentence.

CUOMO FIRST UTTERED his disclaimer in an interview with *The New York Times* last September. It was not an airtight statement. "He's not saying he absolutely, unequivocally will not run," says Meyer S. Frucher, the president of the Battery Park City Authority and a Cuomo pal. Advisers now wince when he is asked publicly about his position on a presidential race, much as Reagan aides cringe when he sails into uncharted territory at a press conference. "Cuomo says it a little differently every time," says one adviser. When badgered by columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak on their CNN television show last December, Cuomo ran into trouble. Did he mean he definitely wouldn't be a presidential candidate? "Oh, no, I didn't say that at all," he said.

"I thought you did," said Evans.

"Oh, no, no, no," Cuomo said.

Is a presidential bid "in the realm of the possible?" asked Novak.

"No, well, you know, if you say run, no, the answer is no," Cuomo answered. "It's possible that I will be elected president of Citicorp. It's possible I'll be president of Miami University. It's possible I'll finally make it to centerfield for the Pittsburgh Pirates. I mean possible, probable, the most probable thing is I'm going to run for governor in 1986. Beyond that, who knows?"

Some of his advisers think they know. They say Cuomo is pursuing what might be called a reverse-Mondale strategy. Mondale spent four years doing nothing but run for president. Cuomo's strategy would be this: win a smashing reelection victory next year, sit out presidential politics in 1987 as a Cuomo ground swell mounts, noisily defy a few traditional Democratic pressure groups, and then jump into the race around the time of the early primaries.

"If he wins with a strong victory in 1986, he'll be national news," says David Garth. "You can start [running for president] very late," meaning as late as early 1988. "If Cuomo wanted to put together a national network, he could do it in a month," says another adviser. "He wouldn't have to do anything at all in 1987. He has flexibility. Who's likely to catch on? Probably nobody. If someone does, Cuomo won't be a spoiler. But if nobody does and he's still high in the polls, he can get in." Frucher says Hart and Kennedy have had their serious shots at the nomination, and Democrats will be looking for a new face in 1988. "I don't think they are going to be looking for Joe Biden or Dale Bumpers. They want someone who can distinguish the Democratic Party from the Republican Party. Cuomo does that better than anyone."

Nobody in Washington thinks that Cuomo's ambitions are limited to being governor of New York. "Cuomo says he's not running for president," went a joke passed around Washington recently. "The next thing you know, he'll be claiming he's not Italian." □

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THE GREAT SOCIETY: AN EXCHANGE

Charles Murray's book, ***Losing Ground****, has prompted considerable controversy. In the March 25 issue of* TNR*, Robert Greenstein challenged Murray's critique of liberal social programs. The debate between Murray and Greenstein continues below.*

LOSING GROUND, the totem, has become something with which to scare small children. It is the book that says that all the poverty programs failed. The book that claims to prove we cannot do anything to help the poor. The book that says the only solution is to scrap the whole system. *Losing Ground*, the book, is none of these things. It does not suggest a threshold or bound to a society's responsibilities to the poor. It does not prescribe a particular size of safety net.

Losing Ground is about the question of how, not how much or whether. It was written in the aftermath of enormous changes in social philosophy, strategy, and approaches to helping. It examines the experience to see what we can learn from it. The goal is not to grade the performance of the Great Society. The goal is to learn from our experience, and move ahead. The nature of the debate about "the poverty programs" has for many years impeded this goal. We created an array of programs and asked each to prove its independent value. Advocates of the programs accumulated packets of data proving their value, one packet for each program. The programs became all-important, and tunnel vision closed in.

Out of these times grew a new form of pseudo-scientific essay, the militant apologia. It is irrelevant that inner-city education crumbled: find the packet that proves compensatory education worked. It is irrelevant that the homes of malnourished children have plenty of food stamps: tell how much worse it would be without them. Deflect a challenge by attacking the agenda of the author.

Robert Greenstein's assault on *Losing Ground* ("Losing Faith in *Losing Ground*," March 25) is a classic of the genre. First, he ignores the damnable state of affairs that motivated the book. He ignores the intolerable reality that scholars of all ideological stripes should be working to change. That reality may be put like this: the more closely the numbers are examined—the more searchingly, the more fairly, the more rigorously—the more vulnerable are the claims that we would like to make about what we, the not-poor and the undisadvantaged, have been accomplishing in our efforts to do good.

In *Losing Ground*, the first and most important part of making this point was to present the bare bones of *what* happened on a variety of dimensions commonly used to measure well-being of poor people of working age from 1950 to 1980. The core chapters of the book are devoted to tracing that story, scrupulously segregrated from my interpretation of the dynamics that explain the data. Greenstein did not dispute the accuracy of my factual account of those events. Indeed, the account cannot be disputed. What I reported about the trends in poverty, employment, education, crime, and family structure happened when I said they happened, and they tell a disturbing story that should animate concern and action no matter how one chooses to explain them.

In the last seven chapters of the book I turned to my appraisal of what the data mean. *Losing Ground* argues that in the early and mid 1960s there was a profound shift in intellectual assumptions about poverty and the problems that accompany it, summed up in the phrase "the system is to blame." If poor people commit crimes, it is because of their environment. If people are on welfare, it is because of structural problems in the economy. If students disrupt classes, it is because the educational system is unresponsive to their special needs. The people who behave badly are not to blame; they are victims. There is truth in all of these statements. But to construct social policy on this basis sends a self-defeating message to people who are experiencing the problems, especially to poor young people.

The poverty programs that Greenstein tries to defend were a very small part of what I call the "reform period" that began to affect social policy in the early 1960s. These reforms, which suffused the workings of education, law enforcement, public assistance, and income support programs, fundamentally altered the world in which a poor person grew up. I spend three chapters describing the nature of these changes, saying as clearly as I can that we must escape stereotypes of welfare mothers and lazy street people. The reality is much more complicated, and it is wrong to think that any one of the reforms can be identified as the demon.

Out of the lengthy and multifaceted development of this argument, Greenstein chose to pick a portion of one chapter, ignoring everything else. Then he recast my argument to fit precisely the stereotypes I was trying to discredit. In the militant apologia, this is standard technique. To make his case, he has to portray Murray as obsessed with the size of the welfare check, and obsessed with proving that all of the poverty programs failed.

Thus he begins his critique with the story of Harold and Phyllis, a poor couple, unmarried, who have just gotten out of high school. My thesis is that, in the 1960s, welfare benefits and eligibility rules changed so dramatically that the total package altered the nature of "what makes sense" for a poor young woman (Phyllis) with no job skills who found herself to be pregnant.

The change in Phyllis's situation is a fact, and it makes no difference whether the state is Pennsylvania (where I set the parable), or Wyoming, or Texas, or Alabama. In 1960 Phyllis got only Aid to Families with Dependent Children, could not live with the father of the child or any other man, could not supplement her income with a job. In 1970 she could get AFDC, Medicaid, food stamps, a miscellany of other new services and resources, and possibly a free apartment of her own. She could supplement her income with a job. And she could live with a man without losing her benefits. These changes fundamentally altered her options.

Greenstein ignores the changes in eligibility rules, which are central to my argument. Instead he attacks the numbers, beginning with a statement for which there is no basis (unless he mistakenly compared an orange on page 164 of *Losing Ground* with an apple on page 159) that welfare benefits increased twice as much in Pennsylvania as in the rest of the country. Whatever the reason, he is wrong. Far from exaggerating the dollar size of the package in 1970, or the rate of increase from 1960, I had deliberately *under*estimated the size of the 1970 Pennsylvania package precisely to avoid any possible challenge on those grounds. I valued Medicaid far below any of the commonly used figures. I left out the value of food supplements, school lunches, and other services. I did

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not include housing allowances, perhaps the most highly valued part of the package for a young woman who wants to get away from home. For Pennsylvania I assigned a dollar value of $134 per week (expressed in 1980 dollars) as Phyllis's package in 1970.

A few years ago the General Accounting Office computed the value of the same welfare package, including the elements I omitted. The results in a generous location, San Francisco, worked out to a weekly total of $200. In a penurious location, New Orleans, the weekly total was $149—both higher than my $134. And the GAO was calculating 1979 totals when, as Greenstein emphasizes, real benefits had fallen about 20 percent from their 1970 purchasing power. My parable began with a 1960 package that was slightly higher than the national average and compared it with a 1970 package that was considerably below it.

Next Greenstein writes, "Murray's argument loses even more force when it's applied to the years after 1970." Wrong again. It gains force. As I noted in the book, there were no new incentives in the early 1970s and even a new disincentive (child support regulations were tightened) in 1974. Increases in the caseload should have slowed and eventually stabilized in the 1970s, as in fact they did. The history of the AFDC caseload tracks with *Losing Ground*'s thesis, right up to the most recent figures.

Greenstein's other objection to the parable is that taking a minimum-wage job was more profitable than welfare "in most parts of the country" by 1970, and much more so by 1980. Here he ducks *Losing Ground*'s point. The most advantageous of all situations is for Phyllis to live with Harold without getting married. If he is employed, so much the better, but by remaining single she does not have to depend on that or rely on the man's future behavior.

This raises broader questions about "causes." Greenstein says income support programs kept poverty from growing in the 1970s. If these programs had not been there, he says, things would have been much worse. He argues that the United States was heading toward a catastrophe in the 1970s that was averted only by our foresight in enacting the income support programs during the 1960s boom.

This ex post facto rationale is a legitimate position (though I do not agree with it), but its advocates must make their assumptions explicit. One assumption is that the progress against poverty that began long before 1965 was a historical fluke, not a reflection of a fundamentally sound system that, left alone, would have continued to work. It is assumed that progress against poverty among working-age people was fated to end in the late 1960s. Without the income support programs, Greenstein's argument necessarily implies that poverty among working-age people in the 1970s would have risen on an order rivaling the increases seen in the Great Depression. A second assumption is that the factors increasing poverty within this group were unaffected by social policy. Single-parent families among the poor were fated to mushroom. Labor force participation among black youth was fated to plummet.

This second assumption is known to be wrong. Labor economists do not deny that a substantial causal relationship exists between the level of welfare benefits (or unemployment insurance, for that matter) and employment behavior. Nor do sociologists who specialize in family studies deny that a similar relationship exists between such benefits and marital dissolution. The results of the negative income tax experiment plus a large research literature, fully summarized in the book, document those relationships beyond serious scholarly dispute. Greenstein tiptoed around those land mines in his indictment of my deceptive and slipshod scholarship.

But I am not satisfied with the state of knowledge in these areas. Specifically, I am unhappy with the monopoly that econometric methods seem to have established. What can fairly be said is that my theory of the causes—or, more precisely, the facilitators—of the trends in employment and single-parent families has not yet been subjected to a test anywhere, including *Losing Ground*. That theory takes for granted that the stereotypes are wrong: poor single women do *not* sit down with a calculator, figure up this year's benefit package, and get pregnant. Poor young men do *not* decide to live contentedly off the dole rather than do an honest day's work. Welfare had a role in changing behavior, but in combination with the many other aspects of the changed environment in which poor people lived, presented in those chapters that Greenstein didn't take on.

The Ellwood and Bane study on illegitimacy that Greenstein accuses me of ignoring appeared when *Losing Ground* was already in press. Let me discuss it now. The study examines the level of AFDC payments in different states, controls for a variety of demographic and economic variables, asks if the differences can explain differences in illegitimacy rates, finds they do not, and concludes that AFDC has no effect on illegitimacy. Fine—except suppose that the process is a bit more complicated. Suppose that it really doesn't make much difference if the total for the welfare package is New Orleans's $149 per week or San Francisco's $200. Suppose that $51 in additional income does not expedite $51 worth of additional fertility behavior—as anyone with common sense is likely to suspect. Ellwood and Bane are not refuting *Losing Ground*'s hypothesis, but that of an anti-welfare stereotype that *Losing Ground* rejects. Similarly, Greenstein cites John Cogan's work on the role of agriculture in explaining changes in black employment, and asserts that his conclusions "specifically refute Murray's hypothesis." He must assume that most readers haven't read Cogan or Murray or both. His work is *irrevelant* to my hypothesis, as John Cogan will confirm.

Where do we go from here? The hypothesis that I want to see tested is that many different changes in "the rules of the game" (of which welfare is one small part) interacted with changes in status rewards brought on by these reforms to cause changes in the behavior of poor people, especially young poor people. It is not so hard to conduct such a test, but it will require us to start listening to those we wish to help—not armed with a clipboard and a set of multiple-choice questionnaire items, but with curiosity and patience, as Ken Auletta did in *The Underclass*, George Gilder in *Visible Man*, John Langston Gwaltney in *Drylongso*, and Elliot Liebow in *Tally's Corner*. Along with our structural equation models we must listen to the chronically unemployed youth, the welfare mother, the drug addict, the criminal. But we must also listen to the employers of low-skilled help, neighbors who are doing fine themselves but are observing the problems around them, pediatricians in hospitals serving poor populations, social service workers, police, and teachers. And we should, as Greenstein adjures, talk to them with as few hidden agendas as we can manage.

In short, we must put aside the defensive maneuverings that have sheltered inadequate and ineffectual programs while the position of the poor has steadi-

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ly eroded. Surely we need not restrict our options to nothing or more of the same. *Losing Ground* is not a call to the barricades for the radical right, and it is not an assault on our commitment to help the poor. It is a call to try to do better.

CHARLES MURRAY

CONSERVATIVES who lionize Charles Murray and seek the dismemberment of the welfare state will be surprised to read Murray's claim above that *Losing Ground* does not "grade the performance of the Great Society," does not say that the poverty programs failed, and does not call for any particular shrinkage of the safety net. So will most readers of Murray's book. On page 227 of *Losing Ground*, Murray states that his "proposed program . . . consists of scrapping the entire federal welfare and income-support structure for working-aged persons, including AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, . . . Worker's Compensation, subsidized housing, disability insurance and the rest." The book is replete with characterizations of the poverty programs—and the Great Society—as failures.

Now Murray seems to back down. He no longer claims that the programs failed. Faced with powerful evidence of the positive effects of key benefit programs, Murray lamely replies that advocates have accumulated packets of proof program by program while ignoring the larger picture of deteriorating conditions for the poor. Yet the most decisive evidence is precisely of the "larger picture" variety—the extraordinary declines in elderly and infant mortality, especially among blacks; the narrowing of the nutritional gap between the poor and the rest of the society; the sharp declines since the 1960s in the number of malnourished children. The failure of *Losing Ground* to acknowledge such evidence remains a serious shortcoming.

Murray also distances himself from his book with his latest statement that poverty programs were only "a very small part" of the changes in the 1960s that contributed to the social trends he deplores. Readers of *Losing Ground* would never guess that Murray thinks this is a small issue. Most reviewers and most of Murray's defenders on the right have found his attack on the welfare state to be the core of his book, and it is this aspect of *Losing Ground* on which I focused. Indeed, it is Murray, not I, who now recasts the argument of his book. Are the poverty programs a major factor or a small issue? Did they fail or not? Should they be abolished or carefully studied and made to work better? Will the real Charles Murray please stand up?

Murray also runs into trouble when he tried to defend his use of the data, especially in his Harold and Phyllis parable. His selective use of welfare benefits for Pennsylvania as though it were a typical state remains inexcusable. Contrary to Murray's claims, data compiled by the Congressional Research Service show that AFDC benefits did rise more than twice as much in Pennsylvania from 1960 to 1970 as in the typical state, meaning that he used data from a highly unrepresentative state to build his case. Nor does he convincingly show that he understated his case by undervaluing Medicaid and other benefits Harold and Phyllis could receive. In valuing Medicaid, Murray used one of the standard methods employed by the Census Bureau. Moreover, even if higher Medicaid values are used, the family budgets for Harold and Phyllis still disprove his claims when properly computed.

In addition, Murray's point that he did not include the value of school lunches and other benefits in Harold and Phyllis's budget is irrelevant. *Losing Ground* tries to show that Harold and Phyllis are better off unmarried than married, on welfare than at work. Those benefits that Murray left out of his computation (but which the General Accounting Office included) are available to legitimate and illegitimate children, to welfare families and to working families. Including them in the family budgets does not bolster Murray's claim that welfare is more attractive than work or illegitimacy more rewarding than marriage.

Most egregious, however, is Murray's contention that the welfare trends of the 1970s support him. Here again his article says something quite different from the book. In the article he observes that in the 1970s, when welfare eligibility was not broadened and when welfare benefits fell, AFDC caseloads stopped growing. Yet this decisively *refutes* the book's thesis. The book argues that liberalized welfare eligibility and benefits after 1960 led to declines in black employment and increases in female-headed households. If this contention were true, then the rise in unemployment and female-headed households should have halted or appreciably slowed in the 1970s, when welfare benefits were cut and the welfare rolls stopped growing. This did not occur. Unemployment and illegitimacy *increased* while welfare decreased. This may be why Murray never acknowledges in the book that AFDC benefits fell or that caseloads stopped growing in these years.

As for the economy, my article cited data showing that economic stagnation—not poverty programs—was the principal reason the poverty rate failed to drop much during the 1970s. Murray responds with wild charges. He says I imply that without benefit programs, the United States was headed in the 1970s toward a Depression-like catastrophe, and that I see the decline in poverty before 1965 as an historical fluke. Of course, I believe no such thing. As my article said, poverty among the nonelderly dropped before 1965 principally because real wages and productivity were rising and unemployment was declining, trends that were reversed in the 1970s. *Losing Ground* acknowledges the strong impact of economic factors on poverty rates only when the economy is healthy and poverty is falling—but fails to acknowledge this impact when the economy stagnates and poverty increases. When this occurs, social programs and policies get the blame.

Finally, Murray again misrepresents research findings. The negative income tax experiments he cites show that a radically redesigned income maintenance system that was being tested—and *not* our current welfare system—had work disincentive effects. The research literature shows that the impact of the current welfare system on work behavior is small. In addition, the impressive Ellwood and Bane research showing no link between welfare and illegitimacy is far more sophisticated and convincing than Murray portrays it. This is why many scholars have concluded that it severely damages Murray's case.

One final point. I am saddened by Murray's charge that I "ignore the intolerable reality that scholars of all ideological stripes should be working to change." My article emphasized the rise in black unemployment and in female-headed households, and called for new approaches to these problems. Where I take issue with *Losing Ground* is in its misuse of data to picture social programs as a major cause of these problems—and its urging that these programs be abandoned.

ROBERT GREENSTEIN

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

High on High School

I think of Hollywood these days as being infiltrated by its own CIA—Covert Investigation of Adolescents. No other subject obsesses the film industry like adolescence. I see studio executives and producers being hired and ranked by the number of teenage children they have: those with the most teenagers have the greatest chance for in-house

The Sure Thing
(Embassy)

observation. I see men in dark glasses loitering around high schools, not for the classic purpose but to catch bits of dialogue, to observe bits of behavior, to note articles of clothing. I see the most daring of film people, if they can get away with it, punking up their hair, layering their clothes, and crashing parties. And Hollywood is only the headquarters: operatives are at work from beach-party California to the rock'n'roll-bound coast of Maine.

It must be so. Look at the films that Hollywood turns out. For many decades it's been assumed that the intellectual age of the audience is about 15; but for the most part, the pictures targeted for that audience have used adults as their subjects. A small portion of the output has always dealt with adolescents themselves—before Wesley Barry and after Annette Funicello—but Hollywood's main occupation was to treat the doings of the adult world in ways that would grip or amuse that 15-year-old mind. Lately there's been a shift: to treat the doings of the teenage world itself for the same audience. The audience has become the subject. Add only that the 15-year-old mind is often in a body much older and that Hollywood hasn't entirely given up on treating mature matters in juvenile fashion, and the statement holds.

I don't have statistics, but who needs them? Look at the film ads in your newspaper. In the past several weeks I've seen *The Breakfast Club*, *Vision Quest*, *Mask* (*The Elephant Man* for kids), plus a trailer for the forthcoming new *Porky's*. And I've only skimmed.

The change from dominance of adolescent appeal to dominance of adolescent subject-*and*-appeal can be dated. Obviously the recognition factor has always been large in all screen appeal: people of every age and kind enjoy seeing their society and their problems actually up there on the screen: the film thus recognizes their existence and reconciles them, at least briefly, to its limitations. For adolescents, however, the recognition factor had always been sugar-coated, Andy Hardy style. Then, in the late 1960s, American film became more permissive under the increased pressure of European film examples and the pressure of changing American mores. That permissiveness soon reached the adolescent film, stripped the sugar-coating, and plunged into candor. American adolescent life was changing, and this changed life was reflected with a verism that would not have been permitted earlier, even about earlier, relatively constrained adolescent life. I have no children of my own, but I've heard enough from parents in the last 20 years to learn what they know and what they don't want to know about their teenage children. And that new verism, about that latter-day behavior, has added another dimension to the teenage film: it has helped to unify the adolescent community, to intensify its conspiracy of secrets against grown-ups, to make teenagers feel they have screen allies against the uncomprehending, hostile society of restrictive adults by which they are encircled.

But adults go to teenage films, too. I know of no sociological study of audience ages for these films, but when I see a teenage picture in a theater, instead of a press screening room, I always see a very visible proportion of adults around me. I hazard the guess that a new genre has developed, for at least some adult viewers: high school porn. Teenagers go to see themselves, as they are or want to be. But there must be many older people who go because they know that high school pictures are almost sure to be raunchy in some degree. Adolescence is pressure-cooker time for sex; the older viewer knows that he's going to see people sexually preoccupied with a single-mindedness that may exceed anything in later years, however sexually busy. And the producer of the film knows that, by focusing on adolescence, he can exploit that preoccupation while waving the banner of Truth.

I'm not trying to rally Legions of Decency or censorship boards. It's years since I've been called as a defense witness in film censorship cases because defense lawyers want witnesses who will extol the merits of their film, not argue that any film ought to be uncensored, regardless of merit. I'm just trying to understand a phenomenon. (Which is by no means domestic. One example: a Dutch teenage film called *Spetters* makes U.S. teenage pictures look like Disney.) The teenage avalanche may have helped to sweep the Western from the screen. The adolescent energy that once went into applauding men who leap onto horses,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Lost in America. Mild but intelligent comedy about a Yuppie couple who leave L.A. to find the "real" U.S. and end up in N.Y. Albert Brooks co-wrote, directed, stars—and does the last best. (Reviewed 3/18/85)

1984. John Hurt as Winston Smith and Richard Burton as O'Brien splendidly fulfill the core of Orwell's book—which is all we get. Direction and design are exceptional. (2/4/85)

Tchao Pantin. Something like Simenon. A young Parisian drug pusher and middle-aged filling-station man become friends in nighttime Paris. Better atmosphere than story. (3/11/85)

Witness. Kelly McGillis and the Amish countryside are so lovely that they lift the well-rubbed murder plot to some freshness. (2/18/85)

SK

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who handle and fire pistols, now goes into applause for non-metaphoric riding and firing. Horror films are still big with adolescents—perhaps even bigger than they were—possibly because they can project all the gouging and decapitating onto the restrictive adults around them. But the high-school picture itself doesn't need the trappings of symbolism; it serves the teenager directly. And it serves older people, one can say, with oblique directness.

Still, not every teenage picture is fake truth or undisguised trash. The latest exception to the generalizations above is *The Sure Thing*. Rob Reiner, who made that slyly witty mock-documentary *This Is Spinal Tap*, directed *The Sure Thing* buoyantly and brightly, but its basic difference from the high-school herd is the script by Steven L. Bloom and Jonathan Roberts. They have done for late adolescence—end of high school, beginning of college—what good writers always do for contemporary subjects: they have epitomized, not merely reproduced. Their teenagers seem to be the spirit of their age, rather than mere specimens of it.

If that's a weighty pronouncement about a light picture, at least I hope it explains why this film is pleasant, is credible in character without being either candied or consciously candid. The story is slight but useful. Two high-school pals split: one boy goes to a California college, the other to New England. (The westbound one hates the Ivy League because the girls all have Band-Aids on their knees from practicing the cello.) John Cusack, the New Englander, falls for a girl in his English class, Daphne Zuniga, who gives him the brush because she is affianced to a fellow in a California law school. At Christmas, Cusack's West Coast friend invites him out to meet a bikini babe, a Sure Thing; Zuniga goes out to visit her boyfriend. Unwittingly, Cusack and Zuniga both arrange for rides in the same station wagon.

You know the ending, but you don't know every twist along the way. (The film has a healthy dollop of another genre, the road picture.) You don't know all the bouncy dialogue, the little character crinkles. Both Cusack and Zuniga give taking performances. At first he is quite unprepossessing, with little of the immediate charm of some other male adolescent leads. This is a credit to the director, Reiner, who didn't want a charm bomb and who saw that he could bring out the appeal of Cusack's performance, which happens. Zuniga *is* immediately appealing, but Reiner has directed at least as subtly with her. In lots of close work—a perfectly placed glance, a perfectly timed line—Zuniga shows a skill that Reiner must have had a hand in fashioning. The two principals are not angelic exceptions to the adolescent society they live in; but they are neither sacks of self-pity nor MTV monsters.

Museums are now very popular, and very confused.

THE GREAT MUSEUM MUDDLE

BY MARK LILLA

NEVER HAS THE American art museum been so popular, never has it been so confused. The signs of its popularity are everywhere. The number of visitors keeps growing, as do the number of cleverly packaged "blockbuster" shows. City after city has embarked on ambitious museum building projects that have attracted bids from the most eminent members of the architectural profession, a telling sign of the cultural significance this institution has now acquired.

Yet to all but the most inattentive museum-goers the signs of confusion are nearly as apparent. Perhaps in response to the new museum audience, perhaps to encourage it, the museum building itself has recently become "user-friendly." Permanent displays have been reduced to free additional space for the packaged traveling show. These shows in turn draw larger crowds that feel more comfortable attending a publicized event with the aid of didactic printed guides, copious writing on the walls next to the works, tape recordings of show tours, one-way directions through the gallery (to see every work "in sequence"), a comfortable café or cafeteria, and the familiarity of the card shop/bookstore at tour's end. Even more than the much maligned blockbuster shows of the 1970s, these structural concessions to the comfort of the new audience have been questioned by the traditional audience accustomed to roaming galleries without the restrictions of shows and programs. The critics are made especially uncomfortable by museum hucksterism that lately seems to have acquired a life of its own. Museum shops now sell T-shirts, tote bags, prints and posters, stationery, cards, books, children's toys and games, jewelry, cutlery, and glassware. The Metropolitan Museum in New York has even established a bridal registry for the convenience of its affianced visitors.

Following these developments, the interested museum observer cannot help but feel that growth, and growth alone, has come to animate the work of all too many museum professionals today. Growth in the number of visitors is an unmixed good, it seems, no matter what the works those visitors are shown or the conditions under which they see them. Growth in the collection is to be sought, no matter what the cost, or how infrequently the works may be viewed by the public, or how great the effect on the private art market. Once a work is in musuem hands, the Association of Art Museum Directors has officially pronounced, it must never be "lost" to private interests again—a rather bizarre notion when applied to collections of contemporary works, an increasing proportion of which move directly from loft to museum without ever touching the private hands from which they are being rescued.

But in fact, unmitigated growth is neither the cause nor the sole consequence of the museum's current confusions. It seems instead to reflect a deeper absence of ideas, an insecurity about the fundamental principles of the museum as a social institution. Growth in audiences and collections cannot mask the

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directionless drift of the American museum, as it is buffeted by the moods and fashions of the moment in art, politics, and entertainment. The museum today neither leads nor stands firm; it "responds." And the claimants to this response continue to grow in number. Over the past 25 years the museum has been told by ideologists that, as a progressive institution, its galleries must be open to ethnic, folk, and political art. It has been told by public officials to display popular works, in every part of the country (even on buses and trains if necessary), if it wishes to retain public funds as a representative, democratic institution. And it has been told by the private art market that it must buy representative contemporary work if its collection is to remain an accurate barometer of aesthetic fashion. The museum has been told that art is not just art, it can also assist in therapy, crime control, welfare programs, economic development, and income redistribution, serve as an educational tool, and act as part of the entertainment industry. And, in almost every case, the museum has "responded."

"RESPOND and thrive" is sound market strategy in private business. But in a major social institution such as the museum it is a prescription for incoherence and, eventually, irrelevance. A museum that owns everything and shows anything, with no discernible purpose or standard, not only fails to serve art, it begins to bore the public. A public led to expect a museum "responsive to its needs" will soon tire of a place that can neither suggest something to which to aspire, nor provide the truly responsive fun of television or movies. One need only examine a museum's annual report, or that of the National Endowment for the Arts, to see that the American museum is at sea without the anchor of clearly articulated ideas. Rather, there *are* ideas, but they are contradictory and undigested ones that pander to every special interest without speaking confidently to the deeper purposes of this institution. Rising attendance has so far allowed museum professionals and public officials to avoid thinking through these questions of aims and purposes. But when the growth finally stops—as someday it must—only the incoherence will remain.

It is a most telling sign of the museum's current problems, perhaps, that it has acquired a new set of highly articulate critics. What distinguishes the new critics is that they do not so much question particular acquisitions or shows as raise more fundamental questions about the political, economic, and aesthetic presuppositions of contemporary museum administration.

A NUMBER of important professional art critics must be counted among this group. These critics—perhaps the most prominent being Hilton Kramer, editor of *The New Criterion* and former chief art critic of *The New York Times*—cannot be dismissed lightly. They are not the enemies of high art, nor, in most cases, of public funding of the arts. What they object to is what they consider the distinct decline in aesthetic standards, as museums have slavishly attempted to satisfy popular and political tastes. One is tempted to label these art critics "conservatives" or "neoconservatives," since most of their charges have been directed at the political left. But their animus is not primarily political; it is aesthetic. They have clearly and consistently held that politics must play no role in the making of aesthetic discriminations, and that this separation must be rigorously maintained, both in the private realm of criticism and in the public realm of the museum. The museum's task is to acquire and display the very best work available to it; that is all. It is an art institution, and nothing more. And if there are to be government arts programs, they must do nothing to distort the public's unmediated appreciation of the best work available. Nonaesthetic criteria—historical, political, religious—are taken to be alien to the appreciation of art, and to the proper management of the museum.

A genuinely political criticism of the museum, on the other hand, has recently been offered by Edward Banfield in his controversial book, *The Democratic Muse*. To make this aesthetic/political distinction clear, it is worth noting that Banfield's conservatism has not only been attacked by critics on the left, but also by Mr. Kramer, who objects to the book's defense of political criteria in consideration of government arts policies and internal museum policy.

Banfield's is an important book primarily because it examines this political dimension from a principled, philosophical point of view. His main target is federal arts programs, and about them he is quite clear: the federal government has no constitutional right to tax its citizens for the support of museums or artists, or for the purchase and display of public works of art. "The American regime exists for purposes that are not served by art," he writes, "and the support of art is not among the powers that were given to the federal government." Mr. Banfield admits that "the public interest requires that there be a courthouse," but, in the most frequently quoted sentence of the book, wonders whether "it also requires that there be a statue in front of the courthouse." His case does not depend on the abuse of federal arts programs (though he provides compelling evidence of such abuse), but rather on the impropriety of government distribution of what he calls "the art experience." Mr. Banfield's book is deeply political, but his conception of art is profoundly asocial. What cannot be explained with reference to individuals leaves him highly skeptical. As if to underline this, he denies that great art institutions bring a country prestige, asking skeptically, "What exactly is national prestige? How is it measured?"

HOW, ONE might add, is it consumed? Art as consumption is a theme explored exhaustively of late by a third group of museum critics, the arts economists. Ever since "arts policy" became a governmental concern in the 1960s, it was inevitable that the museum and its practices would come to the attention of the analytical economics profession. Generally, the arts economists look favorably on museums as public institutions, and few have political reservations about federal support for the arts. (Indeed, some museums have even hired economists as in-house policy consultants.)

Yet they are critics of the museum all the same, because they see this institution in terms radically different from those of the average museum administrator. They believe that art exists only in the consumption of art, and that the job of the economists is to ask whether that consumption has been "maximized," whether the distribution of payment matches the distribution of benefits, whether those payments and benefits are "progressively" distributed, and whether government intervention into the art marketplace may be justified on economic grounds. Considered from the economic point of view, the museum comes to measure art con-

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sumption by the number of visitors coming through the turnstiles each year, and the gifts and bequests a museum receives are simply lumped with taxes and gate receipts in the analysis of museum revenues. Once supply and demand, costs and benefits have been measured, it is possible to recommend changes in museum and government policy, again on purely economic grounds. To the economist, the museum problem is a "public finance" problem akin to financing roadways and setting subway fares, and he sets himself the task of analyzing growth, efficiency, and distribution. It is not an aesthetic problem, nor is it a political problem.

Each of these lines of criticism—the aesthetic, the political, the economic—reflects a perfectly consistent way of thinking about the museum in society. But it is an expensive consistency, one that sacrifices a realistic appraisal of the social functions museums have always served. Though ordinarily unsympathetic to the spirit of artistic achievement, the political and economic critics do have a point: the museum exists outside the boundaries of the private art world. It is a non-private institution, with extra-aesthetic meanings and purposes. What are those meanings and purposes? The contemporary museum clearly has no idea, nor do the new critics, despite the justice of some of their individual charges against the museum today.

IF THE American museum is going to find a secure sense of its proper role in American society, it will have to recover it through an act of historical self-examination. How were most American museums founded? Who paid for them, and why? What did the founders hope to achieve in building them?

The American museum idea was born after the Civil War and quickly spread to every part of the country, propelled by the tremendous economic growth of the new industrial age. Economic growth produced major social transformations, which, in turn, produced the museum. To put it bluntly, the history of the American museum has been the history of the American "bourgeois" class. Before 1870 the American merchant class was a relatively small part of our agriculturally based economy, and the few museums that served this class were mainly private galleries and teaching institutions in the Northeast. By 1930—only 60 years later—most major American cities had at least one public museum, and scores were scattered in improbable small towns across the country. The reason is simple: economic growth created a new middle class in virtually every part of the country.

But the museum was not the only institution built by the new American middle and upper-middle classes. Countless libraries, colleges and universities, concert halls and opera houses, hospitals and charities were built with private funds during this same period. The "Age of Industry," the "Gilded Age"—whatever else we may think of it, this era can also lay claim to being the great age of American civic philanthropy. It is over, but in a sense it is still with us. One cannot walk through our older American cities without feeling we live among the ruins of that age, whose spirit speaks to us through its architecture and the grandeur of its public spaces.

THE COMMERCIAL republic, then, was simultaneously a republic of civic philanthropy (much as Adam Smith, for one, had predicted). And the museum was one of its central concerns. For the most wealthy, the philanthropic impulse was expressed in monumental gifts to the city, or, in the case of Andrew Mellon's National Gallery, to the entire nation. But American museums were not by and large the work of individuals. While they may have been pioneering individualists in corporate life, when it came to museum building the American philanthropists' first impulse was to form a civic association with the expressed purpose of bringing high culture to their cities. In New York it was the "Committee of Fifty" that built the Metropolitan Museum of Art; in Boston it was the members of the Atheneum who formed the Museum of Fine Arts; and in Detroit it was the 40 original members of the Founders Society who created what we now know as the Institute of Arts. In city after city these associations were formed and museums were built by businessmen hoping to make their cities at least as respectable, as "advanced," as those back east. By and large, the members possessed only modest fortunes, and if one looks at their names today one finds few that represent America's "first families."

It is unlikely that many museum founders knew all that much about art;

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unless one went to Europe, one would have had little opportunity to see much respectable art on this side of the Atlantic. They were simple, self-made people for the most part, and their devotion to art was probably outweighed by their strong desire to improve their cities; if that meant museums, so be it. And, like all acts of civic boosterism, their museum activities were a mix of respect for art, pride in their cities, desire for recognition, pure altruism, and raw arrogance. But every one of them believed in social improvement through culture and education.

American museums began as philanthropic enterprises, and so they remain today. College museums aside, private contributions remain the single largest source of museum income. Nor would it be surprising to learn that most of these private donations come from citizens of the city in which the museum is located. Museum trustees strengthen the ties between city and museum. They are usually private individuals drawn from the local business class, and as trustees, they act in a special civic capacity somewhere between that of private individual and public official. The relation between a city and its museum is an intimate one, and the notion of donating art to a museum, or serving on the board of trustees, is one of the few distinctly civic acts open to private citizens. The focus of these acts is on *this* museum, *this* audience, *this* city. People simply devoted to art, or even to the "art world," can have no stake in seeing particular works in this museum rather than another; the city does. Even an international city like New York, which at times can seem like the whole art world, shows civic pride in its museums when it raises funds to keep Calder's *Circus* in the city, or grieves the loss of Picasso's *Guernica* to Spain. Since its inception just over 100 years ago, the building of the American museum has been a central part of the building of American cities.

THE WORD "civic" has been carefully chosen. For it is precisely its civic nature that has been lost, or forgotten, in recent discussions of the museum. By "civic" I refer not only to cities, but to that sphere of human activity that rests uncomfortably between private and public life. That the civic is not the private is clear; but that the civic sphere is not identical with the public sphere must be explained.

Private life is intimate; public life opens up the possibility of anonymity. And, if we are to believe its critics, modern, bourgeois public life is unbearably anonymous. The marketplace and mall are public areas, but we enter them to attain personal satisfaction, and while in them we remain private people. Most public places today are meant to serve our shared, but still private needs; we have come to speak of public parks and public squares just the way we would speak of public beaches or public lavatories. (And we often treat them the same way.) Perhaps "shared consumption" is the most precise definition we can give to our most common government programs, which have become forms of social cooperation, a sort of private (but compulsory) quid pro quo among people who live together. One draws benefits because one contributes. It is a compact unanchored to place or history, since it only exists now for those who agree to maintain it.

IN THE CIVIC sphere men and women are not private or public consumers. They are citizens. They share places and purposes. They cannot dissolve their civic "compact" any more than they can jump out of their skin; nor can they take it elsewhere, or deny its history. A city hall and a courthouse are civic buildings that represent (or should represent) more than a private office building ever can. The same is true of a civic monument. When we look at it we should be reminded of some common event or leader we share by virtue of our citizenship. Monuments remind us that civic life is rooted in history, that civic events are not reversible, that civic goods are not exchangeable. When we step into a voting booth or put on a military uniform, we leave behind the private realm of home and hearth, but we also leave behind the anonymous public realm where we pay our taxes and cash our Social Security checks.

It is a fuzzy line we have drawn, one that perhaps can be seen best in urban places. When we step into the Washington Mall we are meant to feel different from the way we do when we enter Central Park; we are meant to act differently as well. This distinction is a healthy one, and in no way denies the virtues of Central Park. Frederick Law Olmsted designed Central Park in such a way that most areas allow private enjoyment of his carefully constructed "natural" wonder. Yet it is a private enjoyment we share publicly, and one that Olmsted hoped would make all New Yorkers more "sociable." But in the Mall we are expected—joggers excluded—to act "civilly," to feel overwhelmed by the unbroken vistas of grand government buildings. We are equal members of society in Central Park, equal citizens in the Mall.

IT IS AN interesting complication of modern political life that not all projects undertaken with government funds are civic in nature, and that some privately funded ventures can rise to the level of civic acts. The welfare state, to take the most obvious example, has become a program of anonymous public consumption, whatever the civic aspirations of its founders. A privately initiated project becomes civic when it satisfies at least two conditions: it speaks to the shared purposes and experiences of its citizens by what it does or commemorates, and it is open to all citizens. In programs of shared public consumption, openness is not enough; there must be some attempt to ensure that the costs and benefits of such programs are equally shared. But beyond being open to all, the civic sphere is silent on questions of distributive equality. In part this is because the civic sphere is so often made up of the singular, the nonreproducible. While it makes sense for nearly every city neighborhood to have its own public playground, there is no reason for it to have its own city hall or civic square—or mall, for that matter. The special power of civic monuments in particular is preserved by there being only one of them. We flock to our civic places—to the Mall, to Arlington Cemetery, to our state capitols; we do not expect them to come to us.

The museum is not at the center of American civic life, as are our most important government buildings or our commemorative statues and places. Nor is it central to the very operation of the city, as are the courts and city halls. But like our major public libraries (many of which were also founded through private philanthropic efforts), museums were built with the understanding that they were to stand for something we have, or should aspire to have, in common. Not devoted to private or shared public consumption, the museum was to be a *symbol* of the importance a city's citizens placed on art. And perhaps more important, it was to serve as a symbol of the importance of

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having the highest achievements in Western high culture be available to all. The library was meant to represent the same civic commitment to learning, at a time when few could expect to own books.

We cannot claim for the museum or library the civic status of our most precious institutions. When we vote or serve on juries we define ourselves as citizens by these very acts. Looking at pictures cannot be construed as an act of citizenship. But when we are in our cities' museums we are there by virtue of being citizens, looking at shows and collections organized for us in that capacity. Private galleries are open to the public, buying or not, yet there is no pretense of having served the public by showing works. Galleries belong to the art world, and properly so. Just as a library is meant to represent something more than a book shop, so the museum was created to offer more than a gallery ever could.

The history of the American museum shows it to be a civic institution of a very special kind. Bypassing local governments in most cases, private citizens gathered together to make an offering to their fellows, and by so doing became more than private people. One can see the motives for these acts in the rhetoric of 19th- and early 20th-century philanthropy. Museums, the philanthropists believed, would provide the moral uplift needed to raise the common man (read: urban worker and immigrant) to a level of culture at which he could be expected to act like a citizen. The 19th century had tremendous faith in the transformative powers of civic institutions generally, a faith we can see reflected, if only faintly now, in the ambitious architecture with which they were built.

The faith in museums in particular rested on two simple beliefs. First, philanthropists shared the classical belief that art shapes the soul, and that great art shapes a great people. Second, they hoped that making the highest achievements of Western (and later, non-Western) art available to the people would attract the loyalty of the common man to the civilization of which he was a part. Even if we read a little self-interested fear of the new urban "masses" into the philanthropists' actions, it is hard to fault the result. In just 60 years most American cities had made available, to all classes, works of art previously in private hands.

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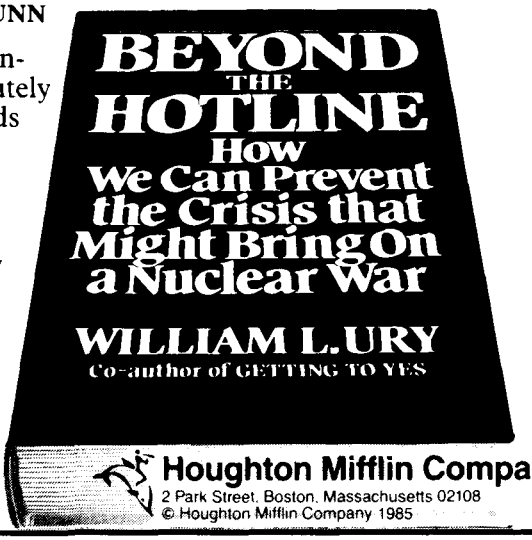

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Perhaps the most tired charge against the museum is that is is elitist, or anti-democratic. Every city does not have a museum, only certain works are shown, these works may be difficult to appreciate, or may represent class biases in taste, and so on. But the museum is a profoundly democratic institution considered from the civic, as opposed to the simply public, point of view. To use contemporary political jargon, the museum is an "empowering" institution meant to incorporate all who would become a part of our shared cultural experience. Any citizen can walk into a museum and appreciate the highest achievements of his culture. If he spends enough time, he may be transformed. This is precisely what the museum founders had in mind when they brought great collections to their own cities. They understood what we, perhaps, have forgotten: that museum education is civic education.

THESE ARE, of course, abstractions. And the problems our museums face are unrelentingly concrete. Should we open a new wing? If so, who should build it? Should we display more works from the permanent collection, or bid for more traveling shows? How can we ensure that our shows are historically sound yet accessible to the public? How much "marketing" can the gift shop engage in without becoming vulgarly commercial? How much of this museum's budget should be devoted to expanding the contemporary collection?

All these problems are in need of civic reorientation. Take, for example, the traveling blockbuster show. Thus far the debate has set aesthetic critics, worried about the decline of the art world's standards, against both democratic populists and self-interested administrators, who seem mainly concerned about attendance. Oddly enough, the result of this debate has not always been a compromise between the two positions, as one might expect. More often it has been a retreat into the only neutral endeavor both sides recognize: art-historical scholarship. Today's shows do not resemble the gaudy "King Tut" or the inexplicable display of recent haute couture at the Met. Instead, the new blockbuster treats a sexy subject (most recently, "primitivism") with all the numbing, didactic formality of the accompanying catalog—the real force behind the show. What Harold Rosenberg once called the "exhibition-as-art-book" has become the demilitarized zone between aesthetes and populists, serving the quite different ends of each, and producing shows only a scholar could love.

But do these shows serve the civic good, as museums have traditionally defined it? No one seems to have asked. The test of the civic worth of a museum's collection, or its series of shows, would seem to be whether a determined visitor could, over a reasonable period, acquire a solid, well-rounded education in art. Trendy or vulgar shows are not solid; a series of narrow, scholastic shows is not well-rounded. The aesthetic critics should recognize that real aesthetic compromises might have to be made if museums are to reach their public. Each museum might have to become a little less discriminating, a little more prosaic and archival, if it is to provide the education that must precede true appreciation. But the museum administrator must also recognize that civic education is the only appropriate extra-aesthetic standard he should apply to building the collections and choosing the shows. His role is less that of a private collector than a public college president who must simultaneously attract "students" while maintaining the quality of the "curriculum."

Blockbusters are not intrinsically good or bad, nor are "standards" and "populism" the real issues. The only real issue is whether each museum is serving the civic ends for which it was created. If these civic ends could be reasserted—in acquisitions, show selection, display, architecture—the looming museum challenges would look a little less threatening. The museum, properly understood, is an eminently defensible institution, more in need of sober self-examination than reform. In the face of its new, articulate critics, the museum should be able to defend itself confidently as an exemplar of that shrinking realm of American life: the City.

CHICKEN MCMENCKEN

The Liberal Crack-Up
by R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr.

(Simon and Schuster, 256 pp., $16.95)

R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. has a grievance. He has gone to the trouble of writing a book, and it is not receiving the attention due it. In the current issue of *The American Spectator*, the magazine he founded and edits, he complains at length that the "formidable forums of book reviewing" controlled by "the Liberals," such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, have "refused to mention the book." In Norman Podhoretz's view, Tyrrell tells us, this has the earmarks of a "conspiracy of silence." But Tyrrell himself has a more jocular explanation. He sees it as the work of "people afflicted with mental disorder," specifically "psychotic denial." This is a fair sample of the rapier-like Tyrrell wit. Wilde he's not.

As luck would have it, just as Tyrrell's complaint was going to press, his book was reviewed in both the *Times* and the *Post*, and far from unfavorably: the former treated it with measured respect ("a valuable compendium"), while the latter gave it an out-and-out rave, thus providing unexpected confirmation of the author's theory about the formidable forums. Still, the general point holds: the book came out in October, and by March not every publication had been heard from. This one, for example. Why the delay? In my case there were two reasons. First, I believe in reading the book under review, every last line. Second, this particular book is a bit—well, unvarying. It's best read in small, well-spaced doses, if at all.

We need not linger long over the intellectual merits of *The Liberal Crack-Up*. It has none. The book is an attack nominally on liberal ideas, but actually on a class of people Tyrrell calls the Liberals, which includes, but is by no means limited to, the liberals. It also takes in radicals (including radicals whose contempt for liberals is as great as his own), bird-watchers, blue-jean wearers, homosex-

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uals, nonpassive women, anybody who either had fun or got angry during the 1960s, and other persons Tyrrell dislikes or resents—everybody from Walter Cronkite to Andrea Dworkin, from Irving Howe to the Allman Brothers. Having conscripted these disparate types into his target group, Tyrrell is free to attack them for mutually exclusive offenses: for supporting the Vietnam War and for opposing it; for celebrating pornography and for deploring it; for promoting economic development and for disdaining it; for gushing about technology and for being suspicious of it. His basic ideological tool, though, is the simple credo of a candidate member of the conservative Outer Party: nukes good, anti-nukes bad; businessmen good, environmentalists bad; housewives good, feminists bad; "defense" good, "peace" bad.

BECAUSE HE accepts the credo in its most primitive form, he commits absurdities. He insists repeatedly, for example, that appeasement "always" leads to war (on the contrary, appeasement sometimes works quite satisfactorily, as it has in America's courting of China). He also asserts that the fall of Laos and Cambodia along with Vietnam demonstrated the validity of the domino theory (it was Indochina that fell; contrary to the theory, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, India, and California did not). Tyrrell's grasp of the creed's subtleties is not always sure. For example, having established to his satisfaction that Vietnam was "the Liberals' war," he stumbles into a serious doctrinal error: "Ultimately, the Vietnam War led to the reign of Pol Pot and the third major holocaust of this century . . ." (Theologians will recognize this as the deplorable Shawcross Heresy, a cardinal "blame America first" sin.)

Argument, as opposed to assertion, is a treacherous arena for Tyrrell. In a chapter devoted entirely to exposing the "vaporings" of people who question the safety of nuclear power, he expresses indignation that technicians are "being forced to build power plants in such a way that they would not have a major accident for thousands of years." Then he assures us comfortingly that "it seems to be true that massive doses of radiation increase one's risk of leukemia, but even then the risk is no greater than the cancer risk incurred by a heavy smoker." And then, unaccountably, he praises the public for growing "more

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sensitive to nuclear energy's dangers." (For this suddenly reasonable public sensitivity he credits "the pressure of the market economy." Market good, government bad, goes the credo. Could this be why there is no mention of the massive public subsidies that alone have made possible the existence of the nuclear power industry?)

"Modern war is admittedly horrifying but wars are usually horrifying," Tyrrell reasons. Then he commits the error of extending his logic beyond tautology: "In fact, life itself has frequently been horrifying." A few lines down the same page, he is sounding the alarm about "the horror of every Marxist triumph with its attendant extirpation of freedom and its frequent acts of genocide." The horror, the horror! But wait a minute, isn't life itself frequently horrifying? If it's O.K. to worry about the horror of Marxism, how come it's not O.K. to worry about the horror of war? Tyrrell can't explain, any more than he can explain why he is in favor of nuclear power. It's the credo.

IN SHORT, Tyrrell has nothing to say. But in this sort of polemical writing it is excusable to say nothing if you say it well enough. And it is as a stylist, not a thinker, that Tyrrell must be judged.

Tyrrell has only two moods as a writer, a mood of sycophancy and a mood of abuse. The former may be found in his syndicated *Washington Post* column, especially when he pays unctuous tribute to an Ed Meese, a Jeane Kirkpatrick, or a Ronald Reagan. In this book, however, only the latter mood is on display. The abuse is expressed in a mock-archaic style. The result is a fast-food version of 1920s verbal dandyism—Chicken McMencken, perhaps.

The formula is simple. First, select a person to attack. If possible, refer to him or her as the Hon. [insert surname], the Rev. [insert surname], or Dr. [insert surname]. Second, call the person a nasty name, either a heavily sarcastic one (esteemed eminento, sonorous pontificator, distinguished scholar) or simply a jeering one—bellyacher, buffoon, dolt, dunderhead, galoot, gasbag, greenhorn, half-wit, idiot, imbecile, jackass, loony, moron, nincompoop, pinhead, poltroon, popinjay, quack, rube, sap, simpleton, snot, windbag, wretch, yahoo, yokel, or zealot. Third, add an adjective (optional). Brazen, fuliginous, gaseous, gimcrack, maudlin, meretricious, piffling, portentous, sophomoric, puerile—any of these will do. Fourth, accuse the person of engaging in bibble-babble, claptrap, flapdoodle, flumdiddle, hokum, moonshine, pishposh, rumble-bumble, pronunciamentos, or tosh. Finally, work in a reference to the United States as "the Republic." You will soon be writing, or programming your computer to write, sentences such as this one, from page 21: "There have always been whistle-brained pontificators at large in the Republic, all promising a New Age full of wonder and kookery."

LEST THIS sound cute or endearing, consider the following samples:

> Some years ago, spurred by youth and idealism, I assessed various of the eminent figures of our time in a modest little book, *Public Nuisances*, which, I am sorry to report, some critics considered impolite.

> He [President Carter] was a scamp mountebank from jerkwater America whose knowledge of government and of history was somewhere between that of the washroom attendant at "21" and a modestly educated welfare queen.

> The most instructive encounters were with the lady profs. As with so many junior faculty in the 1970s they were usually stupid and as uncouth as a Russian airline stewardess.

> The vast majority of feminists were disagreeable misanthropes, horrible to behold, uncouth and unlovely. They were inferior women, contemptuous of the superior women, who through their charm and intellect have so often been able to establish such enviable lives for themselves: home, family, friends, ample leisure, amour, and so on. By contrast, the feminists have lived their whole lives in canvas underwear, burdened by a splitting headache, halitosis, body odor, and other ailments too terrible and obscure to mention.

The first of these items is the first sentence of the book. In addition to the pompous diction—which of course is intentional and "humorous"—it is notable chiefly for its tone of smug self-satisfaction. These roguish boasts recur whenever the author has occasion to refer to himself. I became queasy each time I encountered one. But this is a matter of taste.

The second sample illustrates one of Tyrrell's favorite vituperative devices: his habit of drawing attention to his own cosmopolitan sophistication (he is familiar with the washroom at "21") while at the same time sneering at persons he considers provincial—rubes, yahoos, yokels, and the like. Yet one cannot get around the awkward fact that Tyrrell lives, works, and publishes his magazine in Bloomington, Indiana. There is no dishonor in that. Bloomington is one of the finest university towns in the whole of the Hoosier State. But it ill becomes a resident of such a place to snigger at "jerkwater America." Why does he deprecate what has given him succor?

Sample two also offers an instance of another Tyrrellian tic, his practice of pairing words in an apparently random fashion. "Scamp" suggests an impish, lovable youngster, of the sort who might be played by Gary Coleman, while "mountebank" connotes a jovial, middle-aged medicine-show type—a W.C. Fields. Neither seems especially apt for the purpose of ridiculing Carter, though perhaps a case could be made. There is no doubt, though, that together they are perfect nonsense.

ELSEWHERE in his book Tyrrell describes Walter Mondale and Irving Howe, among others, as "pert poseurs." A writer who had a clear mental picture of the meanings of his words—in other words, a writer who was really thinking—could never write such phrases. One cannot help suspecting that Tyrrell has nothing in particular in mind when he writes this way, apart from trying to seem "Menckenesque." He simply grabs whatever ornate words come to hand from his mental bin and tacks them together, to quote Orwell, "like the sections of a prefabricated hen-house."

The last two items are fair samples of Tyrrell's polemical style, which is the style of every page of *The Liberal Crack-Up*. I would be curious to know if I am the only reader who does not find these passages witty or clever. They have a certain kinetic energy, I suppose, but I can detect no twist, no hook, no satiric surprise. Perhaps I am being obtuse in failing to find much humor in these surprisingly brutal passages, or even in such milder sallies as "Having Andy [Young] as a human-rights ambassador to the Third World was like having a state dinner catered by professional clowns." Perhaps there's a point I'm missing. Then again, perhaps there is nothing here but the rictus of aggres-

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sion: fuck you, he quipped. Because the stream of abuse it offers is so numbingly monotonous, *The Liberal Crack-Up* is, finally, a bore.

R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. would like to be William F. Buckley Jr., whom he idolizes and apes. (Is Buckley "WFB" in *National Review*? Then Tyrrell must be "RET" in *The American Spectator*.) But he lacks Buckley's erudition and tolerance. He would like to be the right's Alexander Cockburn, but he lacks Cockburn's wit and inventiveness. He would like to be Mencken, but Mencken was more than his prejudices. Given time, and with diligent effort, Tyrrell can hope to become the Westbrook Pegler of his generation. For the moment, however, he must be content with being its Wackford Squeers.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

PROFILE IN COURAGE

Pierre Mendès France
by Jean Lacouture
translated by George Holoch

(Holmes & Meier, 420 pp., $34.50)

Jean Lacouture's excellent biography of Pierre Mendès France begins, appropriately, with an account of the night of June 17, 1954. It was then that the French left-of-center deputy who had become the Cassandra of the Fourth Republic received enough votes from the National Assembly to become the prime minister in charge of liquidating the French war in Indochina, a month after the disastrous battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Frenchmen of my generation will never forget the shock that Mendès's coming to power produced in a political system of paralyzed and discordant parties, and in a deeply cynical, discouraged body politic. Mendès, born in 1907 of Jewish parents—his father's family had been in France since the 17th century, his mother's was Alsatian—had become the youngest deputy of France in 1932. He had, briefly, been a junior minister in Léon Blum's second (and last) Popular Front government in 1938. Arrested by Vichy for having "fled" to Morocco—in order to keep fighting Hitler despite Pétain's armistice—and condemned to six years in jail, he had escaped from prison. (He later, charmingly, told how, in Marcel Ophüls's unforgettable film *The Sorrow and the Pity*.) He joined General de Gaulle in London and served in a squadron of the French air force, but de Gaulle, after moving to Algiers in 1943, made him his minister of finance.

The first act that brought him to the attention of all the French was his resignation from his next post, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in the post-Liberation cabinet headed by de Gaulle, after the general chose the "easy" economic policy proposed by the minister of finance, René Pleven, instead of the austerity plan Mendès had advocated. De Gaulle—no expert in economic affairs—seems to have thought that the exhausted French public would bitterly resent the drastic controls recommended by Mendès, and that the softer, less interventionist alternative would allow him to concentrate on what really mattered to him: foreign affairs and defense. He later realized his mistake, and even published in his *War Memoirs* (1959) Mendès's stern and prophetic letter of resignation—an oblique but unusual tribute to a man who was, by then, de Gaulle's bitter political adversary. (Indeed, when de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, and again in 1963, he imposed drastic economic cures comparable to those he had refused in 1945.) Mendès's reputation was further enhanced by his constant, courageous opposition to the war in Indochina. A first attempt at obtaining the National Assembly's mandate to form a government had failed in 1953, but the fine, stark, and unadorned speech he delivered then gave him enormous prestige.

The atmosphere of the Mendès France cabinet of 1954 can best be compared to that of the first months of

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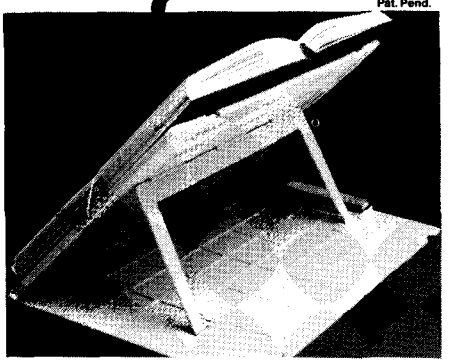

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"MEANWHILE, in New York, a black ex-Marine named Andy Frederick tried to stop two punks from ripping off a candy vendor. They turned on him and one hit him on the head with a bottle. Frederick pulled a knife and stabbed his assailant in the chest, killing him. After much publicity, Frederick turned himself in and was rewarded with two nights in jail. Who should turn up to console him but Bernhard Goetz, the subway gunman? Could be the beginning of a new Rainbow Coalition?"

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the Kennedy administration (although Mendès's own model—including the use of initials instead of his full name—was FDR's New Deal). There was the same appeal to youth, the same promise of rejuvenation and reform, the same exhilaration about cutting knots, solving problems, making decisions, the same concern for the media (*L'Express* was the rallying point of the *mendèsistes*), and the same zeal and zest of the best and the brightest gathered around the leader.

THE DIFFERENCES, however, are important. JFK promised to wake up the nation from a period of slumber; PMF proceeded to restore French pride after a long period of national humiliation. JFK found no major crisis waiting to be resolved (indeed, he created one at the Bay of Pigs); PMF had to cope first with Indochina (which he did, by negotiating the Geneva partition agreements within the 30-day deadline he had set), then with Tunisian nationalism, then with the interminable and supercharged drama of German rearmament, finally with insurrection throughout Algeria. JFK acted within an institutional system that provided him with all the authority of the American presidency; PMF depended on the whims, the fluctuations, and the resentments of an assembly in which he had no real basis of power, whose parties either hated, or distrusted, or refused to join him, and where every new bold move on his part provoked a harrowing debate that could end with his overthrow. JFK was murdered after 34 months in office. PMF was defeated after seven months and 17 days. He clearly had the support of the majority of the French, especially the young; but he was the victim of the wretched institutions of the Fourth Republic.

PMF was only 47; he lived for almost 28 more years, but the rest of his career was a succession of fiascoes. He took over his old, heterogeneous, discredited, and shrinking Radical party, but in the elections of January 1956, his Socialist allies gained more seats than the Radicals, and the president of the Republic chose Guy Mollet, the narrow-minded and weak-willed leader of the Socialist Party, to head the new government, instead of Mendès. Poor PMF did not even obtain a decent portfolio. From his empty Ministry of State, he saw Mollet capitulate to the French settlers and to the French army in Algeria (the Socialist-Radical Alliance had promised peace through negotiations), and he resigned, a few months before the Suez expedition. PMF, who had, throughout the Fourth Republic, kept in touch with de Gaulle in the hope that the general would come back to power legally in order to put an end to the Algerian war, was scandalized by the circumstances of de Gaulle's actual return in May 1958. He now saw in de Gaulle a Machiavellian ally of the enemies of the Republic, a new Bonaparte whose power originated in a quasi-coup d'état; and he never forgave him.

For a brief moment, ten years later, during the crazy "events" of May 1968, Mendès—who now called himself a Socialist—appeared as a possible savior, should de Gaulle's regime collapse. But de Gaulle, as is well known, won the last, decisive battle of that month, and Mendès lost his seat in parliament during the elections of that June. His relations with the man who had patiently made himself the new leader of the left opposition, François Mitterrand—Mendès's minister of the interior in 1954—were both close and complicated (never more complicated and less close than in May 1968). Unlike Mitterrand, PMF had never been very enthusiastic about an alliance with the Communists, who hated him. After de Gaulle's resignation, in the presidential elections of 1969, the ticket constituted by Mendès's Socialist friend Gaston Defferre (candidate for the presidency) and by himself (as Defferre's future prime minister) got only five percent of the popular vote.

AFTER THAT, it was Mitterrand's turn. He took over the ruins of the old Socialist Party, created a new one in 1971, and finally became president in May 1981. By that time PMF was in very poor health—a mentor on the sidelines, whose main effort, since the mid 1970s, had been to get Israelis and Palestinians to talk with and understand one another. Like his friend Nahum Goldmann, PMF thought that Israel's true ideals and interests required Palestinian self-determination. Once in power, Mitterrand gave him no mission at all—only a fine funeral oration after Mendès's death in October 1982.

There is something infinitely paradoxical and sad about Mendès's career. Except for Léon Blum, one of his heroes, also a thoroughly "assimilated" French Jew, no politician was more savagely and disgustingly attacked than Mendès. Still, by the time he died, he had become a sort of national father figure, recognized by all as a giant of moral integrity and political courage. This universal awe can only raise mixed feelings. The French seemed, in this case, to combine a certain fascinated affection for ultimate failure (the first hero in French history textbooks is the Gaul Vercingetorix, defeated by Caesar), and a tendency to switch from intense fear or anger to respect and admiration once the object of earlier hostility has become obviously harmless.

ALL HIS life Mendès had wanted to give priority to a reform of the French economy. He wrote several books about it. In the 1930s and during the war, he was an ardent champion of democratic planning (the best analysis of his recommendations can be found in Richard Kuisel's admirably searching *Capitalism and the State in Modern France*). He was an orthodox Keynesian, and wanted a mixed economy combining the advantages of a free market and rational direction by the state, incentives for productive investment and financial rigor. But during his brief stay in power he never had the time to devote himself to economic affairs. Victimized by a political system that gave no lasting power to fleeting heads of government, especially when they did not have the support of a major party, he nevertheless opposed with inflexible vigor the institutions of the Fifth Republic, which allow the executive to govern and—until now—free it from the grip of party coalitions and machinations. (Mitterrand, who had opposed the Gaullist constitution as firmly as Mendès, now exploits all its possibilities with virtuosity.)

In truth, this potentially great statesman had little taste for the "games, poisons, and delights" (de Gaulle's phrase) of politics. He was a throwback to the generation of the founding fathers of the Third Republic. Like them, he had faith in the people, in rational discussion, in the sheer authority of honest argument based on facts; and he distrusted that long and heavy monarchical tradition of France, which, in his view, replaced rational authority with a mix of arbitrary and magical power on top, and an informed citizenry with infantilized subjects at the bottom.

The irony lies here: both Mendès and de Gaulle disliked smoke-filled rooms and petty parliamentary in-

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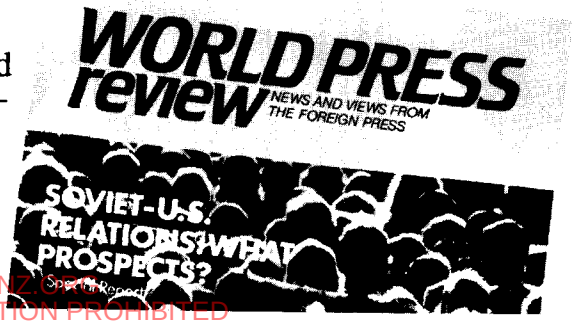

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trigues, both wanted a direct link with the people (PMF was most effective in weekly "fireside chats"), both saw themselves as pedagogues. De Gaulle's pedagogy was more theatrical. The general knew the power of myths, mise-en-scène, spectacle, and illusions; he once quoted Chateaubriand on the need to lead the French through dreams. But Mendès's ideology remained—should I say incurably?—that of parliamentary Republicanism. He wanted to rule only by appealing to his listeners' minds. (In this respect, he can best be compared to Raymond Aron, the greatest of all reasoners, who never cared for him because he was skeptical of Mendès's economic *dirigisme* and distrusted his desire for East-West détente and for a new international economic order favorable to the developing countries.) It is a tragedy that PMF and de Gaulle were never, after the Liberation, able to combine their talents. And it is a paradox that de Gaulle, in his mystifying way, accomplished—in foreign as well as in domestic affairs—so much of what Mendès had wanted.

Jean Lacouture, one of France's most distinguished and experienced journalists, has become a prolific and enthusiastic biographer. He has written about the lives of men he admires: Blum, Mendès, Malraux, Mauriac. He has recently published the first of three volumes about the most fascinating Frenchman of this century, de Gaulle. Lacouture does not probe deeply into his subjects' private selves, nor does he merely gather facts; he lets the psychological portrait emerge from the account of their acts and works. He is particularly good at describing the pressures and passions that swirl around or emanate from his characters in key moments of their careers. He does not conceal the blemishes of his heroes—Mendès could be harsh with both his entourage and with his foes, and had little finesse in dealing with people—but he leaves you in no doubt of his own feelings of admiration and love. His vitality, his powers of empathy, generosity, and decency shine throughout this volume—especially in his tribute to Mendès's courage, patriotic passion, sense of fairness, and luminous intelligence. The translation by George Holoch conveys, on the whole, the verve and drive of the original.

STANLEY HOFFMANN

Stanley Hoffmann is Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and chairman of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University.

A TALE OF TYRANNY

Shah of Shahs
by Ryszard Kapuściński
translated by William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 152 pp., $12.95)

> It was a Japanese breed. His name was Lulu. He was allowed to sleep in the Emperor's great bed. During various ceremonies, he would run away from the Emperor's lap and pee on dignitaries' shoes. The august gentlemen were not allowed to flinch or make the slightest gesture when they felt their feet getting wet. I had to walk among the dignitaries and wipe the urine from their shoes with a satin cloth. This was my job for ten years.

The emperor with the dog is Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, the subject of Ryszard Kapuściński's previous book, *The Emperor* (published in Polish in 1978, in English in 1983). Ethiopia is the site, but *The Emperor* is really a work by a Polish journalist about the masks, the delusions, and the ultimate helplessness of tyranny.

Here is Kapuściński's portrait of the Ethiopian emperor: a solitary man holds an entire system together. His Serene Majesty keeps no notes, no written records; he wakes up early, takes in the daily reports of the chief of the palace spies while on his morning walk, without saying a word himself. He knows that were he to ask questions and express opinions, the whole system of reporting would "collapse into subjectivity." Finishing his walk, the emperor feeds his dogs, his black panther, and then stops off to admire the anteater sent to him as a gift by the president of Uganda.

HIS SERENE Majesty is a man of few words. It is important for majesty not to bluster. When he speaks, he speaks in "scant foggy mutterings." The "Minister of the Pen," standing half a step from the throne, bends his ear close to the imperial lips and records the inaudible mutterings of the emperor. From the secret cabala of the emperor's words, the Minister of the Pen would then construct any set of decisions—decisions that the emperor could repudiate any time he wanted. Such is the Cult of the Emperor, the culture of "meanness and servility" around the throne.

Then the collapse comes. But magic does not fail in a sudden and single moment. The faith in the divinity of the Guided One dissipates over a period of time. The system rested on bluff, and the bluff has been called: "Whims of power, labyrinths of palace politics, ambiguity, darkness that no one could penetrate." As an entire edifice crumbles, the charade goes on. It has to, for dictatorship is theater. Men are left wiping urine with a satin cloth.

A tale of Ethiopia or of Poland or of Iran? Or a caricature of tyranny everywhere?

Kapuściński's themes repeat in the new book on Iran. The tale of Iran's collapse is familiar to us by now. But no one has told it quite as Kapuściński has. His is a book of great economy and power. It has its author's skill with vivid imagery, a breathless way of writing that carries the reader along, a supreme sense of the absurd. It is written in free-flowing "notes" and "photographs." Even its style of writing reproduces the chaos of a society uprooted at its foundations.

The claim that men who know tyranny and live in its grip have some "comparative advantage" in writing about it is a difficult one to defend and sustain. What is clear from this book on the shah, and the previous work on the Ethiopian emperor, is that Kupuściński has an ability all his own to go into

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places of hopelessness and come back with works of truth. His eye for human folly is as sharp as V. S. Naipaul's. His sympathy and his sorrow, however, are far deeper. His writing is free of Naipaul's scathing judgments.

There is a fatalism in Kapuściński's reportage and insights that must be the gift to him of Poland itself. "The world," he writes, "contains communities for whom nothing has gone right for centuries—everything has slipped through their hands, and every ray of hope has faded as soon as it began to shine—these people seem to bear some sort of fatal brand." Men bearing this fatal brand try to change impossible legacies. But in the end, after the emotion and the fervor, they awake amid ruins. They fight to break one set of chains only to forge another.

"HE HAS LEFT. HE HAS RETURNED." This is Kapuściński's summary of the Iranian tale: the departure of the shah, the return of Khomeini. The face of the man leaving is "a gaunt, elongated face, its controlled features so bent on showing neither anxiety nor defeat that it no longer expresses anything at all." The face of the man returning is a "severe, patriarchal face that has no intention of expressing anything at all."

A POLISH writer who happens on the scene scribbles on some index card the following words about the man returning: "He will deceive you and make promises to you, but don't let yourself be fooled." And, then, he adds: "Who said that? When? To whom?" Iran in 1979: just another place where promises were made and broken.

"It is authority," Kapuściński writes, "that provokes revolution." We must look at the man departing Iran with a handful of Iranian soil if we are to understand the return of his nemesis. Men dread revolutions; they prefer old ruts to new risks. Revolution comes as a last resort. It comes when ordinary, submissive men "sprout wings." This happens when the ways of authority turn to a provocation.

> Every revolution is preceded by a state of general exhaustion and takes place against a background of unleashed aggressiveness. Authority cannot put up with a nation that gets on its nerves; the nation cannot tolerate an authority it has come to hate. Authority has squandered all its credibility and has empty hands, the nation has lost the final scrap of patience and makes a fist. A climate of tension and increasing oppressiveness prevails. We start to fall into a psychosis of terror. The discharge is coming. We feel it.

A feeling prevails among a ruling elite that it is allowed anything. "Scandal after scandal and illegality after illegality go unpunished." Powerless classes and men watch the spectacle; they are afraid to challenge the system, but "they keep detailed accounts of the wrongs." They obey; but they hate, and they keep watch. The exact moment when these wrongs are added up is a great historical riddle. A ruler, hitherto tolerated, abuses the patience of his people. And then the walls behind which authority has been hiding crack. Terrified men cross a border when a policeman shouts at some ordinary man at the edge of a crowd, and suddenly a man stands his ground: "He just stands there looking at the policeman. It is a cautious look, still tinged with fear, but at the same time tough and insolent."

The entire "Great Civilization" of the shah begins to unravel. Against this civilization of "inert machines" and alien ideas, men hold up the image of a pure past. And Kapuściński, who hails from a land where the past has been shelter, knows why this happened in Iran:

> A nation trampled by despotism, degraded, forced into the role of an object, seeks shelter, seeks a place where it can dig itself in, wall itself off, be itself. . . . In the face of the encircling afflictions and threats of reality, it goes back to a past that seems a lost paradise. It regains its security in customs so old and therefore so sacred that authority fears to combat them. This is why a gradual rebirth of old customs, beliefs, and symbols occurs under the lid of every dictatorship—in opposition to, against the will of the dictatorship. The old acquires a new sense, a new and provocative meaning.

The "Great Civilization" of the shah—a foreign package—leads straight into the world of the ancestors.

That entire Great Civilization was a play, a charade: a "one-character play, and the actor was the director. Everyone else was an extra." The spotlight is always on the character, but there is a great deal of bustle around. "The play takes place on several levels at the same time. Many things are happening on stage." Confusion breaks out; men throw away their scripts—they do so on the ground floor and then are joined by those on the intermediate levels—and everyone begins to make up his own lines. The "black flags of the Shiites" appear on stage with a rallying cry of *Allah Akbar*, God is Great:

> In the last scene the gem-encrusted peacock throne—the throne of the Shahs—comes down from the top floor to the ground floor in dazzling many-coloured radiance. . . . But a group of electricians comes on stage, unplugging the cables and cutting the wires. The brilliance begins to fade, and the figure itself grows smaller and more ordinary. Finally the electrician steps aside and an elderly, slim man, indeed the kind of gentleman we might encounter at a movie, in a café, or in a line, rises from the throne, brushes his suit, straightens his tie, and walks off stage on his way to the airport.

A fraud he had been all along, the lead character. The monuments in the streets are pulled down. Golam, a man respected in his Tehran neighborhood for pulling down monuments, a "veteran" in this field—he was a boy when he pulled down monuments of Reza Shah, another king of kings who died in exile—says that, yes, he did have some blisters on his hands from pulling down the monuments of Reza Shah's son. But he concedes that it wasn't really such a difficult thing pulling down those monuments; the monuments were built quickly and cheaply. Sycophants had

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competed with one another to put up the monuments to the king of kings. But the sycophants were in a hurry. It was shoddy work. The Great Civilization was a "rejected transplant." It made the Iranians feel alien, dispensable. It had to go.

Revolutions are affairs of the heart. Atomized men discover one another. But it is all a brief affair. The revolution tries to survive its militant moment of triumph through symbols and metaphor and incantation. But the foreign visitor who scribbled the notes about the betrayed promises knows he is watching a "dying fire." The men who bring down the dictator act like his faithful heirs, "perpetuating the attitudes and thought patterns of the epoch they themselves have destroyed." It all happens unconsciously. Inherited traditions are boundaries. Beyond these boundaries men are rarely able to venture. Iran, a reenactment of a familiar story:

> Iran—it was the twenty-seventh revolution I have seen in the Third World. Amid the smoke and the roar, rulers would change, governments fall, new people take their seat. But one thing was invariable, indestructible, and—I dread saying it—eternal: the helplessness. These chambers of the Iranian committees reminded me of what I had seen in Bolivia, Mozambique, the Sudan, Benin. What should we do? Do you know what to do? Me? Not me. Maybe you know. Are you talking to me? I'd go whole hog. But how? How do you go whole hog? Ah, yes, that's the problem. Everyone agrees: That is indeed a problem worth discussing. Cigarette smoke clouds the stuffy rooms. There are some good speeches, some not-so-good, a few downright brilliant. After a truly good speech, everyone feels satisfied; they have taken part in something that was a genuine success.

Two "extras" have the final word in this great play. Their story is more profound than the departure of the man with the gaunt, elongated face or the return of the patriarch with the stern face.

The first extra is Razak Naderi, a boy of 12, who at age nine came to Tehran from a village 600 miles away, looking for work. He left behind his mother, two younger sisters, three younger brothers. In Tehran, Razak gets a bakery job; the oven where he works, from four in the morning until nine in the evenings, is a deep hole in the ground with walls of inlaid clay. He sends what he makes to the village. The work is irregular; he is often unemployed. He misses his family, goes back to the village, but he knows that he cannot stay. He returns to Tehran, waits in Gomruk Square among other laborers waiting for work. Someone notices him, hires him for a while, and the boy is happy to work. But always the same yearning for home returns. "Right next to Razak there is the world of the Shah, the revolution, Khomeini and the hostages. Everybody is talking about it. Yet Razak's world is even bigger. It is so big that Razak roams around and can't find a way out."

The second is Mr. Ferdousi on Ferdousi Street. He sells—what else?—Persian carpets. Ferdousi looks at the world around him as if it were a B-film. It is all, says Ferdousi, a "matter of taste." The "horrors"—all of them, the thefts, the political crimes—are committed by "men with no taste." Ferdousi unfolds a carpet to be enjoyed by a foreign journalist who he knows is unable to buy it. Iran, says Ferdousi, has given the world poetry, the miniature, and carpets. All three are useless "from the productive viewpoint." But all three are about "taste"; they adorn life. Through these three creations, a nation buffeted by all sorts of troubles continued to live and to express itself. Roll a carpet on a "wretched, parched desert" and there before you, Ferdousi points out, you see a garden, a pool, a fountain; you see "peacocks sauntering among the shrubs."

FOUAD AJAMI

Fouad Ajami, director of Middle East Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, is author of *The Arab Predicament* (Cambridge University Press).

CRITIC IN HIDING

Mikhail Bakhtin
by Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist

(Harvard University Press, 416 pp., $25)

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) was one of the most important thinkers to emerge from Russia in this century, but he and Fate, with whom he had a talent for collaborating, contrived almost successfully to keep this fact forever hidden.

A generation ago, if you knew Russian and cared for the literature, you knew Bakhtin as the author of a book on Dostoevsky (1929) and the adapter of the term "polyphonic" to describe what he considered to be that author's principal innovation in the novel form: allowing the characters to have voices that were not only their own, quite independent of authorial speech, but also equally weighty and valid. This insight did not impress everyone to the same degree, since it seemed that polyphony, as it was then understood, could be descried in the work of novelists before Dostoevsky. It might well have been more impressive had we then known more of Bakhtin, for his writings amount to nothing less than a world view, and his individual works can scarcely be properly understood in isolation.

In fact, we knew more of Bakhtin than we realized, for some of us (myself included) had on our shelves books attributed to other scholars, evidently with Bakhtin's feckless complicity, but actually written by him. He appears to have thrust his candle under any available bushel and to have been in life a perfect master of elusiveness.

In the raucous intellectual bazaar that succeeded the Revolution in Leningrad, when factions of every kind were contending for official favor and the means of earning a living, Bakhtin was a haunting absence on the larger scene. On the smaller he appears never to have been without a "circle," a coterie of students and disciples (to whom our debt for the survival of his work and indeed his person is very great, the Master himself having taken next to no pains in the matter).

Shadowy though he was, he was arrested in 1929 on some vague charge,

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but because of his bad health he was sent into internal exile in Kazakhstan rather than to the camps. He remained on the far periphery of things until the early 1960s (and doubtless owes his life to having been safely distant from Stalin's murderous frenzy). Still, he continued to write, and produced a body of work on a very wide range of topics. Prodigiously polymath and, despite a crippling bone disease, seemingly inexhaustible, he worked not only in literary theory but also in fields as disparate as Russian Orthodox theology, linguistics, biology, psychopathology, and even the everyday cunning of collective-farm bookkeeping.

THIS WORK is now in the process of being resurrected, understood, translated, and evaluated. American scholars have been among the most active researchers, and their work makes it clear that Bakhtin has an extraodinary effect upon people, some of whom undergo a kind of conversion experience in reading him. In a remarkable introduction to Caryl Emerson's recent translation of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Wayne C. Booth, author of the epochal *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), all but recants many earlier views and laments the belatedness of his encounter with Bakhtin, who might have saved him and others from fundamental error. "If Bakhtin is right," he says, "a very great deal of what we western critics have spent our time on is mistaken, or trivial, or both." And Bakhtin, he clearly believes, *is* right.

Numerous works of exposition and commentary have begun to appear, as have translations of Bakhtin's major texts, but this book, by two distinguished professors of Russian literature at Indiana University, is the indispensable guide. It undertakes not only to explicate all of the major works, but also to set them in historical perspective (which requires a daunting breadth of eruditon), and even to put into coherent narrative what is known of Bakhtin's life. But before praising the book further to the many readers that it deserves, I wish to offer a strategy for coping with it.

The best advice is to persevere. It gets better and better. Skip the introduction, which is needlessly discouraging. It makes Bakhtin sound like a hallucinated crank, and, as the subject of a biography, about as suitable as Prester John. Lightly skim the following pages right up to chapter eight. Try throughout to avoid irritation by the evidence that the editors at Harvard appear to have been rather frequently out to lunch: we read that God spoke to Abraham out of the burning bush, that Copernicus dispelled the notion of heliocentric planetary motion, that Saransk is 400 miles west of Moscow, that an "old assumption of metaphysics" is "to perceive is to be," and so on. In the chapter on Bakhtin's religious activities we are given extensive accounts of several philosophico-religious groups, only to be scrupulously informed in each case that no hard evidence places Bakhtin at their meetings or among the members. Pages later, they are coolly referred to as "groups with which Bakhtin was associated"—the reverse of what has been demonstrated at tedious length.

Nevertheless, persevere. At around chapter eight the book catches fire, for we have finally reached the core of Bakhtin's thought, his ideas about language and literature and their implication for human life in general; and it is a consistently absorbing intellectual adventure through the rest of its course. An additional source of interest in the second half is that Bakhtin's later life is far more amenable to traditional biography, since it was witnessed by more people who are still around to testify. The story of his final years is well told and very moving.

Without more oversimplification than that to which readers of brief reviews are inured, one might say that all of Bakhtin's thought derives from an analysis of what really happens when A says to B: "Your cat is dead."

The prevailing view is that A sends a message to B, who knows its code (they speak the same language) and can therefore interpret it. The message is ready-made, has been assembled from the finite lexical and syntactic resources available, and is fixed in meaning. If, sometime later, A or some other sender transmits the same four words to B or some other receiver, a repetition of the message will have occurred.

Bakhtin has a radically different view, which will appeal to common sense until common sense becomes aware of its implications. "Your cat is dead" will be said to B by some particular A in some particular manner (intonation, gesture) under certain particular circumstances; and all of these (A's relationship to B, his tone of voice, the context) partici-

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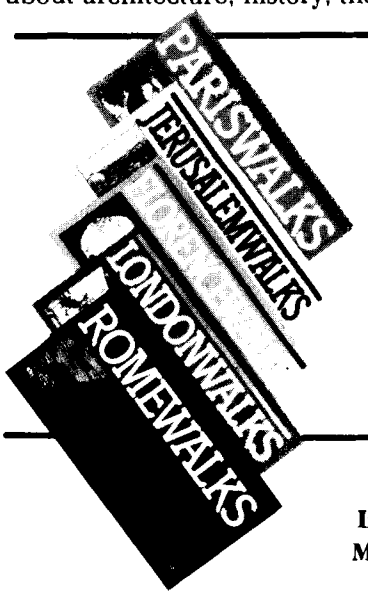

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pate as fully in the speech event as the consonants and vowels of the message. Indeed, says Bakhtin, there *is* no message apart from these conditions (and he uses the term *utterance* to distinguish this complex speech event from the fixed message of the usual view). Note that what is *not* said in this specimen of communication is as essential a part of it as the other constituents. In A's relationship to B (to say nothing of the cat) might lie concealed a simultaneous, unverbalized, but mutually acknowledged text: ". . . and good riddance!" It goes without saying that each utterance is unique, a kind of provisional collaboration between A and B, and that no repetition of it is thinkable.

It is not a great leap from this to assert that, just as there is no text without its context, so there is no A without B. The self has no existence apart from its coexistence with the not-self, with the other. Furthermore, there being a multitude of others, and of contexts for one single other, the self is forever, through what Bakhtin calls "dialogue," in a state of becoming, never the same and, a fortiori, never finished. All of Bakhtin's work grows out of his contemplation of what the slash means in the familiar conjunction of pronouns: I/thou. At this point I will have alerted some readers to Bakhtin's partial resemblance to thinkers as distant from him and each other as Martin Buber and Jean-Paul Sartre, so it is time to recommend that you approach Bakhtin's uniqueness in person, taking this book as the most convenient means of access.

You will probably find him a most seductive, kindly, and liberating thinker. In all of the formidable opponents that he selected—Freud, Marx, the Formalists—he identified the chief fault as the imposition of categories with a terrible finality upon the gorgeous variety and open-endedness of actual human life. He is incorrigibly subversive, gleefully distributing master keys to all who are imprisoned in some maximum-security framework of thought: the isolated soul as the locus of psychic life, the economic determination of everything, the literary text as the unalterable mechanical sum of its devices. And, for someone obsessed with the constant changeableness in the relationship I/thou, he was at all times touchingly himself. His last nurse wrote down on March 7, 1975, his last utterance: "I go to thee."

CLARENCE BROWN

Clarence Brown, who teaches Russian and comparative literature at Princeton, is the author of *Mandelstam* (Cambridge University Press), among other books.

VACATION

The sand burns.
The afternoon takes
hours. Men and women
strip to knotted strings

and oil themselves—they come
between her and the sea.
The hundred thousand
dollar houses

tremble in the distance,
maybe even
in her mind. But that
is fixable—that's why

she's here: the sky
a stationary blue
for planes to write upon,
the benches bolted

to the walks, the old men
staring steadily, and watches
shining clear as day in towels—
everything is fixable

except the sea,
which touches
and is touched
and breaks.

HEATHER MCHUGH

THE POET AS PRIVATE EYE

Henry Purcell in Japan: Poems by Mary Jo Salter

(Knopf, 64 pp., $13.95, $6.95 paperback)

Mary Jo Salter's first book places her squarely among the new breed of poets who seem to be charting a direction for American poetry in this decade. I mean poets such as Amy Clampitt, Brad Leithauser, Richard Kenney, William Logan, and Gjertrud Schnackenberg, who, with one or two volumes published, have already unsheathed a remarkable intelligence, poise, learning, wit, and sense of traditional form. Literary historians have sometimes assigned poetry of this stamp exclusively to the 1950s, but it has been written—sometimes more, sometimes less—in every decade since the 1920s. Apart from the obvious answers, I don't know why fresh energies are being channeled in this direction. In any case, the real interest is not so much in the coherence of a new "movement" as in the actual work of each of its poets.

What first strikes us with Mary Jo Salter is the achieved tone and fine-grained diction. Crisp, Augustan, faintly laced with satire, it's an instrument suitable for a wise, just-worldly-enough older woman—an Elizabeth, perhaps, Bishop, Hardwick, or Bowen, as you will. Some of the poems early in the book are addressed to women: an Italian cousin, Lear's daughters, Vermeer's "Laughing Girl," an Italian-American grandmother, and an unnamed woman writer whose letters are the subject of a reflective sonnet. The instances, personal, painterly, and literary, are sifted for clues in the patient detective work of self-discovery, which for an artist is always in part a self-creation. Salter is willing to look almost anywhere if she senses the presence of the relevant goods—the Boston Public Gardens, a snowstorm, a pet cat, an outdoor amphitheater, and even a "facsimile of a chapel" in a large museum. The poet, forgetting that she is "not really a Christian," kneels and prays for her grandmother. "What consecrates a place?" she wonders and begins testing the quality of the local silence.

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But isn't God everywhere?

Or nowhere? In the cold light of reason
(above the stained-glass, track-
lights one might find in a modern kitch-
en),
I thought of that blindered, overbearing
knight.
I wouldn't have brought back his Cru-
sades,
wouldn't confess to sins that don't
originate with me.
Yet knowing of my share,
and knowing I'd never happen, in my
own
century, on a better place to look,
I pulled up a chair.

The second section of the book is a series of lyrics that sketches a simple narrative of love, marriage, and finally, motherhood—the last condition presented only in its prenatal phase and set, unpredictably enough, in Japan. "Expectancy" comes to seem a foreign country with its own alien rituals and language, its own—I was going to say *brooding* mystery. The poem concludes this section and naturally leads into the final third of the book, six meditations on contemporary Japan.

It is in the Japanese poems that Mary Jo Salter steps outside what might be considered reasonable expectations for a first book in the new 1980s style. These brilliant and searching poems are the best in the volume. "Shisendo," the record of a pilgrimage to the Hall of the Hermit-Poets, remarkable for both its visual detail and mood of reflective aspiration, is the capstone of the collection, and a warrant for the future of this more than promising poet. "Welcome to Hiroshima," a visit to the war memorial and—painful to write—museum, says the things that have to be said about its subject, the one note of horror in the book. I find equally compelling the title poem of the volume and will be certain to think, when I hear the music of the *Orpheus Britannicus*, of this poet's lines:

I stood as far from them

(or so it felt) as we all stood
from the foreign country of the dead.
Yet at home in my random corner
on truth, with no choice but to play
the world sung in a transposed key,
mine was another mourner's voice:
And again I say rejoice.

I save for last the poem I have returned to most often when rereading this book, "Japanese Characters," a freely composed series of reflections on modern Japan, its ancient written language, the opacity of foreign behavior, and the larger problem of decoding the universe. All of Salter's detective skills are called into play, not least the tactic of keeping to her own private angle of vision as the best chance for making sense of so much unruly data. Resisting the temptation to quote all of the poem's 200-odd lines, I excerpt the finely realized conclusion:

What am I learning then? Perhaps to wish
less fervently the Romans will march in
dispensing justice: for every man one
vote,
for every voice a single character.
(What should we call the lanes between
the stars,
or the silence burning even at the cores
of those so bright they make us feverish?)
Just as new words, once never seen, ap-
pear
on every page as soon as known, the sky
prints images upon the clouded eye:
distinguish these, and others will come clear.
Immersed in truths by half, the vertigo
of apprehending patterns through a win-
dow
rinsed clean—until it may well not be
there—
one questions further, "What's next to the
Bear?"

ALFRED CORN

Alfred Corn is a poet and critic. His latest book of poetry, *Notes From a Child of Paradise*, was published last spring by Viking Penguin.

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

mainstream of the Democratic Party accepts that unilateral action by the U.S. is sometimes necessary, but Krauthammer seems to be arguing for unilateral interventionism as the guiding rule for U.S. foreign policy. On that provocative point, he is right to separate himself from the Democratic Party.

ROBERT PASTOR
College Park, Maryland

ABORTION DISTORTIONS?

To the editors:
Amy Schwartz mistakenly treats the most radical right-to-life position as representative of the movement ("Bitter Pill," February 18).

Even fairly hard-line anti-abortionists do not argue that "you oppose all abortion or you condone murder." Nor do they argue that abortion is so terrible "that even to talk about weighing one set of rights against another . . . is obscene." Reagan has stated that a mother's right of "self-defense," i.e. her right to void a life-threatening pregnancy, should outweigh the baby's right to be born. This position is shared by the majority of anti-abortionists. Ms. Schwartz may regard this as a small concession, but the fact remains that her representation of the pro-life movement is incorrect. Most of the movement's adherents do *not* "oppose all abortion." Nor are they so disgusted by the procedure that they are incapable of judging a mother to have rights that outweigh her unborn child's. Ms. Schwartz is simply wrong.

In addition, she refers to the use of "grisly images such as those in the film *The Silent Scream*," but then says that "Reagan and other conservatives have a very different reaction when the left tries to mobilize public opinion on the nuclear freeze with graphic depictions of the horrors of nuclear war." She is ignoring an important distinction. The torments of nuclear war are irrelevant to whether a freeze would reduce the possibility of such torments. But the suffering of an aborted child is hardly irrelevant to whether abortion should be more tightly restricted. To demonstrate that such suffering exists is not, of course, to automatically decide the question. But to imply, as Ms. Schwartz does, that it only "muddies the issue" is really quite incredible.

JACK NOBLE
Los Angeles, California

To the editors:
It is a rare thing when a single sentence can capture the quintessence of a debate that has produced a shelf-ful of books on each side of the question. TRB's column on the question of abortion ("Abortion Time Bomb," February 25) contains such a sentence. He writes, "Until you prove to me that a three-month fetus has a greater sense of itself than, say, a cow, I am going to continue thinking that [abortion should be legal]."

Here it is, then, in stark simplicity. Life that cannot be *proven* to have more self-awareness than an animal may be lawfully snuffed out. But where does that leave us? With this criterion, how many three-month-old babies would be under the protection of the law? How many victims of Alzheimer's disease? How many schizophrenics?

TRB has rendered a service in showing where the lines fall.

ERIC R. UNSWORTH
Peabody, Massachusetts

THE POWERS THAT BE

To the editors:
John Silber says that the War Powers Act is a needless restraint on the conduct of foreign policy in general ("Presidential Handcuffs," February 18). The fact is, however, that the War Powers Act does not abridge the vast majority of the president's foreign policy powers, and deals only with the conduct of war.

As for the conduct of covert action, Congress has acted to restrict only the president's power to conduct war covertly. The constitutional requirement for a congressional declaration of war is an important and cherished safety mechanism. The 90-day rule that is written into the War Powers Act is merely the parameter that Congress chose to impose on the president in 1973. As we saw in Lebanon, Congress is not unwilling to expand that time limit if provided with proper justification.

CLIFFORD ZEIFMAN
Austin, Texas

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement by James Farmer (Arbor House). Recollections of a turbulent time. (Reviewed 4/1/85)

Continental Drift by Russell Banks (Harper & Row). Characters and their crimes and dreams unfold on a large canvas. (4/1/85)

Benjamin Constant and the Making of Modern Liberalism by Stephen Holmes (Yale University Press). A valuable study of a complex liberal thinker. (3/25/85)

Louise Bogan: A Portrait by Elizabeth Frank (Knopf). The tragic life of a sternly lyric poet, masterfully composed. (3/25/85)

Enlarging the Change: The Princeton Seminars in Literary Criticism, 1949-1951 by Robert Fitzgerald (Northeastern University Press). On hand at the inspiring birth of the Gauss Seminars. (3/18/85)

Equal Distance by Brad Leithauser (Knopf). An accomplished novel about Americans in Japan. (1/21/85)

In Custody by Anita Desai (Harper & Row). A portrait of the country few foreigners know: the India that is Indian. (3/18/85)

Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages by Jeffrey Burton Russell (Cornell University Press). A scholarly study of the devil's history and an impassioned meditation on the problem of evil. (3/18/85)

The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam by Said Amir Arjomand (University of Chicago Press). An informative study of the relation between religion and state in Iran and Islam. (2/25/85)

The Intellectual Follies: A Memoir of the Literary Venture in New York and Paris by Lionel Abel (Norton). The life and times of the literary-political-Jewish intellectuals from 1930 onward. (2/11/85)

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Screens, Statues, Stadium

AT LUNCH the other day Jack Limpert, the editor of *The Washingtonian* magazine, said to me that someone should write a piece imagining what the world would be like if suddenly there were no television. My immediate reaction was: "For one thing, there would be no elections. We have forgotten how to hold elections without television." But slowly during the afternoon, through the evening, and into what Robert Lowell called the skunk hours of the night, I realized what a desolation Jack was proposing. At the thought of all our screens an absolute void, I felt like crying out with the German romantic Jean Paul when he realized that the Enlightenment had proclaimed that God is dead: "The sky is black. Where once was the effulgent eye of God, now there is only an empty socket." I have never been so troubled since one day, while working at the library of the University of Colorado at Boulder, I looked at some of the graffiti on the desk, and the words stood out: "If God is dead, who will save the Queen?" I could not work for the rest of the day. Imagine our lives without television. Jack needs Jonathan Swift to write that for him.

THE RITZ CARLTON is one of the fancier hotels in Washington. The extremely comfortable small bar usually has guests like Raquel Welch or Donald Sutherland or (during the Martin Luther King Jr. anniversary) Stevie Wonder with his retinue—or even, for the inauguration, Yves St. Laurent, who told the Ethiopian waitress: "You have such a beautiful tan." Attached to the bar is a larger room, where you may usually listen to a pianist playing " 'S Wonderful," but one night recently it was taken over for a reception. The room was packed. That the secretary of the interior was a guest means nothing in the Fairfax Bar. The presence of his predecessor, James Watt, caused more excitement. Who were the hosts? A group of oil shale men from the West? No, they were Indians: members of an organization of American Indian businessmen in Washington. To them too, James Watt was the catch of the night: that tells you something of the West, of Indians, and (like it or not) of James Watt. I was contemplating this scene—a reception of a chamber of commerce anywhere—when a voice at my elbow said: "So this is where you hide." It was Gary Barone, an owner and chef of Gary's, one of the grand restaurants of the city. He is part Italian and part Mohawk; his delightful wife is a full-blood, even though, as he himself puts it, "You'd think she is an Irish girl." The Indians owned the Ritz Carlton that night. There are more things in Washington, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy.

WHY DO WE PUT UP so few statues now? Capital cities especially should have statues all over the place; but so should other cities. After all, you learn something about Buffalo when you go there and find yourself face to face with Millard Fillmore in gun metal. Washington has some great statues, but that raises another question: Why do so few people look at statues? I know people (even in this office) who walk past the statue of a man seated in a chair at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and M Street. They do not know who he is. He is Longfellow. Would Washington now put up a statue to a poet? There are no statues of Confederate leaders in Washington—for those you must cross the Potomac into Virginia. Once in the South, go from town to town, and you will find that all statues of Stonewall Jackson show him facing north. He never turned his back on the enemy and ran. Whitehall, the main street of government in London, has a statue of Charles I at one end, and one of Cromwell, who chopped off his head, at the other end. Boston is another great city for statues. It had all those great divines like Henry Ward Beecher and Daniel Webster. I shrink and quail as I pass their outstretched fingers and their bronze eyes piercing into my wickedness. Cities of America: put up statues.

IN 1979 THE Library of Congress stopped entering new books in its card catalog. This denies computer illiterates like me access to any book published after that date. I don't read many books "later than Trollope," as a friend of mine once informed a bookseller from whom I was buying Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* But occasionally I would like to find one. The other day I needed a book published in 1981. I went to the information desk to beg for help. At my protest against "those ridiculous indecent machines," the assistant punched up the call number of the book for me. Then he said with great weariness of soul: "We'll soon be completely at their mercy—they're taking out the old card catalog soon." I could not believe it. He echoed my incredulity. What does Daniel J. Boorstin, the librarian of Congress, think he is doing? The rooms and rooms of the cabinets of the card catalog are part of the heritage not only of American but of Western civilization. It is inspiring merely to stand among them—the endless endeavor of the human mind. Far from removing them, Dr. Boorstin should make the library's catalog again what it was meant to be: a record of the printed word on cards of printed words—not on a screen with tortured green symbols.

WHEN I FIRST visited America, Washington had a major-league baseball team, the Senators. Lyndon Johnson threw in the ball at the opening game—a rite that then baffled me. But I have since grown to love baseball. The winter of my discontent is enduring the feeble, lackluster game of American football, followed by the even sillier scamperings of netball—I'm sorry, basketball. (It isn't a basket at all; the ball falls right through.) Once again Washington is trying to get back major-league baseball. The commissioner of baseball does not believe that Washington can find enough fans. His skepticism is justified. Baseball needs a population of preferably ethnic blue-collar workers, which is why Baltimore, Boston, Chicago (in fact, almost every baseball city) have such great teams. You can't support a baseball team in Yuppie Heaven, as the capital has become. Ah, but soon I will climb the steps at the back of the stands at Memorial Stadium for the first time this year, look down again on the lovely sward of green and the immaculate diamond, watch the players take their places for the most civilized game except for cricket, and then lift my voice with 26,000 others: "O-O-O-Os." One swallow may not make a summer. Nine Orioles do.

H.F.

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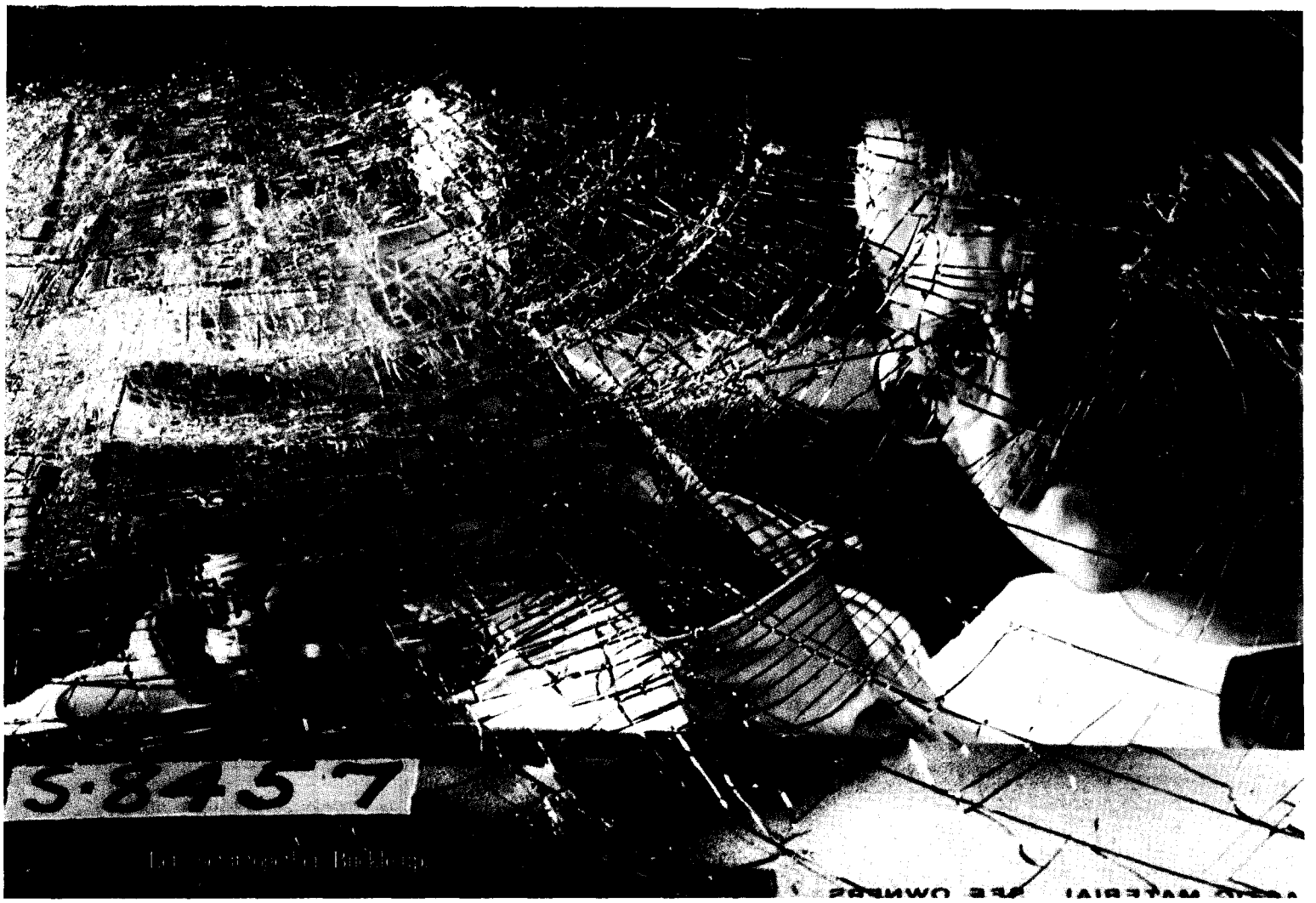
Shattering old ideas about safety.



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